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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA
NEW DISCOVERIES

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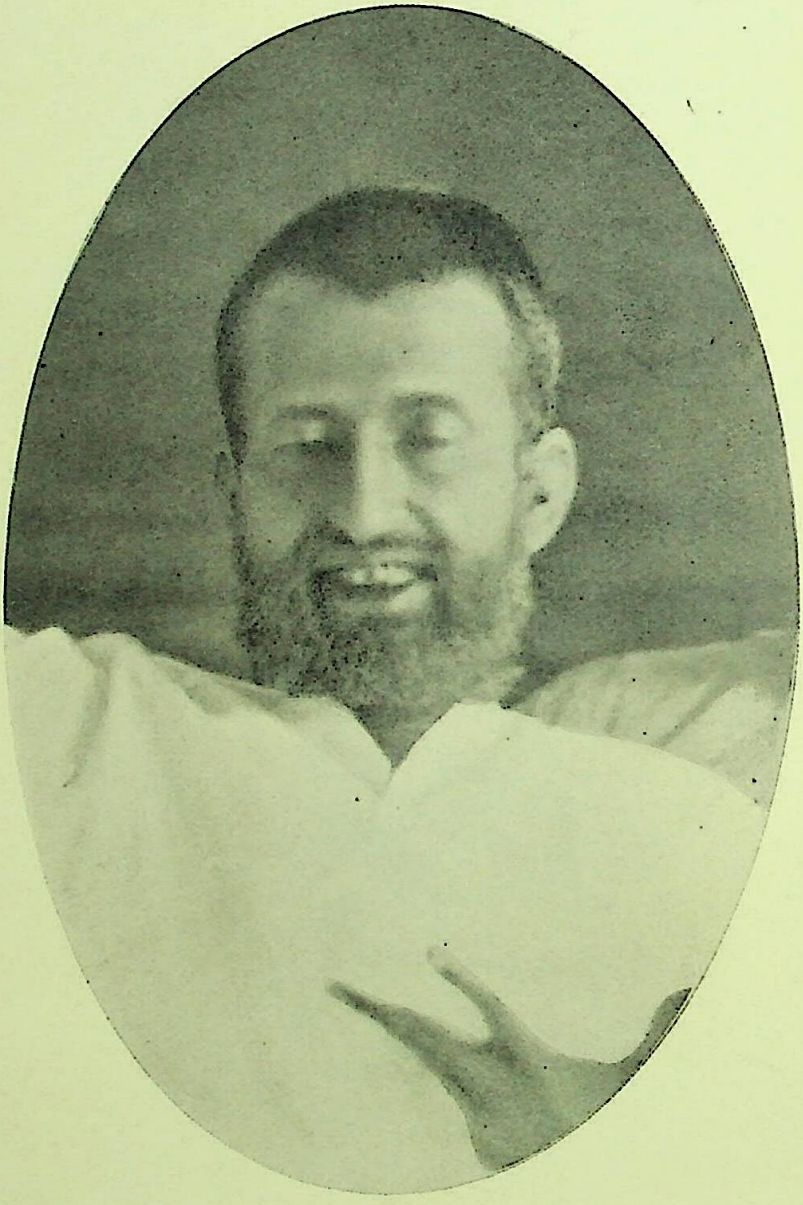

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA NEW DISCOVERIES

By
MARIE LOUISE BURKE

I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

ADVAITA ASHRAMA
4 WELLINGTON LANE
CALCUTTA 13

Rs. 20/=

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IV

By the time Swamiji gave his third lecture, "The Divinity of Man," at the Unitarian Church, on Saturday, February 17, the Detroit newspapers had recovered from their reticence and reported upon it at some length. The first two paragraphs of the report in the *Free Press* of February 18 have been quoted in "The Life" (fourth edition, page 335), and the next five paragraphs in Volume IV of "The Complete Works" under the title, "Is India a Benighted Country?". But although much of the following article will be familiar to the reader, I will nevertheless reproduce it in its entirety, for it gives so excellent a picture of both Swamiji and his Detroit audience. Moreover, so far as I know, the last half of this report has not hitherto been reprinted:

INDIVIDUAL INFINITY

Swami Vive Kananda's Lecture Last Evening.

Philosophy of Swedenborg from a Hindoo Source.

Fatalistic Qualities of the Ancient Indian Religion.

Unitarian Church Crowded to the Doors by Pleased Auditors.

Swami Vive Kananda, Hindoo philosopher and priest, concluded his series of lectures, or, rather, sermons, at the Unitarian church last night, speaking on "The Divinity of God" [sic]. In spite of the bad weather, the church was crowded almost to the doors half an hour before the eastern brother—as he likes to be called—appeared. All professions and business occupations were represented in the attentive audience—lawyers, judges, ministers of the gospel, merchants, a rabbi—not to speak of the many ladies who have by their repeated attendance and rapt attention shown a decided inclination to shower adulation upon the dusky visitor whose drawing-room attraction is as great as his ability in the rostrum.

The lecture last night was less descriptive than preced-

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Published by
SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA
PRESIDENT, ADVAITA ASHRAMA
MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

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PREFACE

When in the spring of 1950 I started looking through old newspapers in the New York, Brooklyn and Boston Public Libraries for articles about Swami Vivekananda, I had no idea that my search would lead to the writing of a book about the Swami's life in America. I was living at the time in New York City, and a fellow member of the Vedanta Society of Northern California had suggested that I hunt for and have photostated whatever articles I might find about the Swami. This seemed not only a useful but an absorbing occupation. It was, moreover, a rewarding one, for from time to time I came upon news reports not mentioned in the biographies of Swami Vivekananda and perhaps not previously known. Such discoveries seemed an end in themselves; I did not look or see beyond them.

A year later, when I was still living in New York and still turning the yellowed pages of newspapers, I was requested to check a not incredible but somewhat astonishing story. A member of the Vedanta Society of Northern California had by chance learned that Swami Vivekananda had visited Salem, Massachusetts, in the days before the Parliament of Religions and had left behind his trunk, his cane and his shawl at the home of a Mrs. Woods. As I have told in Chapter One of this book, I forthwith went to Salem and in the Essex Institute found that the Swami had indeed visited the town and had, moreover, lectured there. The newspaper reports of those lectures constituted what may be called a "find," for they pertained to a period of the Swami's life in America which had heretofore been obscure. I must admit, however, that the unearthing of these Salem lectures did not constitute as great a discovery as I had supposed, for quite recently I have read a complete version of a letter that Swami Vivekananda wrote on August 20, 1893, which was published in the *Brahmavadin* of February, 1905. Many passages are to be found in this *Brahmavadin* letter which have been subsequently and inexplicably deleted from the English editions of "The Letters of Swami Vivekananda." One such passage reads as follows: "I am going to speak before a large society of ladies in Salem on Monday. And that will introduce me to many more." Thus the fact that Swamiji gave at least one lecture in Salem prior to the Parliament of Religions will not be news to those who

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have read the February 1905 issue of the *Brahmavadin*. I regret that until a large part of this book had been printed I was not one of those people. But in any case, the Salem lectures themselves had remained unknown and on discovering them two things became clear to me: one, that there was no doubt a great deal of material regarding the Swami lying undiscovered in various libraries throughout the United States; and two, that such material should be searched for and, when found, made available to his devotees.

Thenceforth I set to work in earnest. New material began to pour in. Some came as a result of my efforts to unearth it, some came totally unsought, and all served to throw new light upon the Swami's life from August, 1893, to April, 1895—a period of which we have had little detailed knowledge and with which this book is concerned.

It was not, however, until the early part of 1955 that I was able to present this material to the public through a series of articles in *Prabuddha Bharata* (March—September, 1955). But even during the writing of these articles new material continued to come into my hands, and it soon became evident that its presentation called not for a series of magazine articles (which gave signs of continuing indefinitely) but for a book. Thus, in the fall of 1955, five and a half years after my first search for Swami Vivekananda's name in a New York newspaper, the present book was undertaken. (The seven *Prabuddha Bharata* articles with minor changes and the addition of more material constitute Chapters One to Five.)

Truly speaking, this book cannot be called a biography; rather, it is, as it is intended to be, primarily a source book of the period it covers. First, my purpose in writing it was to present every scrap of new material that I had found or that, in one way or another, had been made available to me. A biographer necessarily selects his material, using it to highlight or to illustrate various aspects of his subject. I have made no such selection, for in sharing this new material with the Swami's devotees I did not feel that I should take the responsibility of withholding any part of it. As a consequence, I have included news articles that are sometimes repetitious and sometimes of seeming insignificance. I believe, however, that the serious student of Swami Vivekananda will not find this lack of discrimination a fault, for to him everything regarding the Swami is of interest and of value. The second reason this book cannot be called a biography is that, with the exception of the first section of Chapter Thirteen, in which I have made free use of known material, I have avoided the inclusion of facts

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about and contemporaneous evaluations of Swami Vivekananda which are already known. My narrative, therefore, is not complete or exhaustive, as a biography should be. I have, for instance, given only slight attention to the fact that throughout this period the Swami was organizing and guiding his Indian work through a voluminous correspondence.

But although I have endeavored to restrict myself to the presentation of new discoveries, I must admit that in order to present them in their true light and significance I have placed them against the background of the Swami's life and thought, as well as against that of the times to which they pertain. When necessary, I have referred to some known facts and have, to that extent, drawn upon published biographies, letters and memoirs. I have also, in Chapter Two, made free use of the published histories of the Parliament of Religions, for without as detailed a picture as possible of this most important episode in the Swami's life in America, the significance of the material in the subsequent chapters would be obscure.

There are two more reasons for my having overstepped the bounds of a source book or a mere compilation of newspaper reports and other material. First, in some instances the available newspaper reports are not self-explanatory and, taken at their face value, put Swami Vivekananda in a somewhat false light. This is particularly true of the reports which relate to the controversies the Swami was forced to engage in while in America. I was faced with the choice of either suppressing this material and thereby suppressing important and revealing incidents in the Swami's life, or of presenting it in conjunction with certain facts and explanations by the light of which it could be properly understood and evaluated. The second course was, I felt, owed to Swami Vivekananda, and in choosing it I have of necessity devoted several pages to explanatory passages (in, for instance, Chapter Eight, section IV ; and Chapter Twelve, section IV).

Second, in making a study of Swami Vivekananda's life and thought in America, I found that certain theories regarding his American mission which had been held by his biographers and devotees were not supported by fact. New interpretations, based on new findings and also on a re-examination of the Swami's published letters and other writings, seemed to be in order. I have, therefore, devoted four sections (Chapter Eight, section V ; Chapter Thirteen, sections II, III and IV) to a detailed analysis of the Swami's mission in the West.

In my endeavor to present the new material against its historical

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background, I have included a candid picture of Swami Vivekananda's antagonists, the Christian missionaries of the 1890's. It is perhaps unfortunate that I have had to recount the disagreeable controversies of a past decade. But since this book was written in an effort to present as many facts about the Swami's life in America as I was able to discover, I could not with good conscience omit or suppress relevant history. It may also be said that the Swami's attitude toward and conclusions regarding the activities of Christian missionaries in India can still prove helpful in solving a problem that remains, to say the least, troublesome. In fact, I believe that Swami Vivekananda's approach not only to this particular problem but to India's many other difficulties is still pertinent today and will continue to be pertinent for years to come. From what I have learned of current Indian thought, it appears that a number of modern Hindus consider the Swami's views outmoded and no longer applicable to changed conditions and ideologies. But from what I have learned of Swami Vivekananda himself, it appears obvious that his counsel is still of vital relevance and that, if I may be permitted to say so, the Indian people will neglect his teachings only at their peril.

Since my narrative deals exclusively with the period extending from the Swami's first arrival in America to the spring of 1895, I have included for the benefit of those readers who are unfamiliar with the full story of his life a Prologue and an Epilogue, which together give a brief résumé of the years before and after those dealt with in the body of this book. To one who would make a thorough study of Swami Vivekananda's early life in America, I recommend that in conjunction with this book he read the Swami's early American lectures (particularly those delivered at the Parliament of Religions) in "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda"; Chapters XXI, XXII, XXIII and part of XXV of "The Life of Swami Vivekananda," by His Eastern and Western Disciples (fourth edition); and pages 65 to 226 of the fourth edition of "The Letters of Swami Vivekananda," and additional letters in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda." Throughout the course of this book I have referred to these works—all of which have been published by the Advaita Ashrama in Mayavati, Almora, India—as "The Complete Works," "The Life" and "The Letters."

In reproducing articles from American newspapers, I have given them exactly as they were in the original. Except for details of format and obvious typographical errors, which I do not think need be perpet-

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uated, wrong spellings of proper names and faulty punctuation and grammar have been left uncorrected. The misinformation of the American press regarding things Indian has also been allowed to stand; for the original material gives glimpses not only of Swami Vivekananda but of the cultural climate which he encountered. In those cases, however, where journalistic errors make the material unintelligible I have given, when possible, bracketed suggestions as to what may have been intended by the reporter and, when this has not been possible, bracketed question marks to indicate the present author's bewilderment. Although excerpts from some of the newspaper reports have been quoted in "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" or in his "Complete Works," the full text of every article has been included, except where otherwise indicated.

In quoting Swami Vivekananda's newly discovered letters, poems and notes, I have nowhere taken the liberty of editing them, but have reproduced them in their entirety and have retained the original punctuations and sometimes hastily written sentences. While in some cases minor editing of punctuation would not have been amiss, I believe that in at least one book his letters and other writings should be reproduced as he wrote them without omissions or changes. The reader will no doubt observe that quotations taken from "The Letters" vary at times from the published versions. These discrepancies, I assure him, are not due to my editing but to the fact that wherever possible I have taken quotations directly from the transcriptions of the Swami's original, unedited letters. Where the original has been in Bengali, I have sought and received the invaluable help of a translator, who has given me from the Bengali edition of "The Letters" a literal and authoritative translation of many passages in which accuracy was, I felt, of prime importance. I have often used these translations in preference to those in the English edition of "The Letters."

It should perhaps be mentioned that although this book is published in India by the Advaita Ashrama, whose policy is to follow English spellings, the American style of spelling has been used throughout, for not only is the author an American, but by far the greater part of the quotations included in the book have been gathered from American sources. The original spellings have, of course, been let stand in material taken from non-American sources.

In undertaking the responsibility of writing about Swami Vivekananda, I have been careful to be accurate in every respect. It is perhaps too much to expect, however, that errors have not crept in unnoticed

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and that, despite my best efforts, discrepancies have not eluded me. In fact, since the completion of the printing of this book I have discovered a few mistakes, and if the reader will bear with me I shall take this opportunity to correct them.

1. The important typographical errors which I have come across are as follows:

Page 46, line 4 from bottom: for *region* read *religion*
Page 66, line 6 from bottom: for *Spaulding* read *Spalding*
Page 210, line 23: for *biship* read *bishop*
Page 381, line 11 from bottom: for *"Rise and Follow"* read *"Rise to Follow."*

2. I have been recently advised by Miss Cornelia Conger of certain mistakes in the transcription of her article which appears on pages 92-97. My apologies to Miss Conger and my request to the reader to make the following corrections: Mr. and Mrs. Lyon's house in Chicago was a *frame* house, not a *farm* house (page 92); Mrs. Lyon was *short,* not *stout* (page 93), and Miss Conger speaks of Swami Vivekananda's accent as the lilt of a slight, well-bred Irish *brogue,* not *tongue* (pages 93 and 95). I should also mention that although on pages 91 and 108 I speak of Miss Conger's grandparents as Mr. and Mrs. John B. *Lyons,* their name was *Lyon.*

3. As I mentioned above, a complete version of Swami Vivekananda's letter of August 20, 1893, to which I have referred in Chapter One, was published in the *Brahmavadin* of February, 1905. A passage in this letter (which has been deleted from subsequent versions) reads: "I do not know whether I shall go back to Chicago or not. My friends there wanted me to represent India and the gentleman whom V—— introduced me to is one of the Directors of the Fair. But I refused as I would have to spend all my little stock of money in remaining more than a month in Chicago." This passage, which has been overlooked by every biographer of the Swami, including the present one, clearly indicates that it was not, as has been generally supposed, a lack of credentials that prevented him from registering as a delegate to the Parliament of Religions on his arrival in Chicago, but a lack of funds. (Incidentally, the exact date of the Swami's arrival in North America has always been uncertain. On the evidence of some recently acquired information I am able to say that he *most probably* landed at Vancouver on Friday, July 25, 1893.)

4. On pages 464 and 465 I have spoken of the society which Swami Vivekananda started in New York in November of 1894 and

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have made the guess that its purpose was largely connected with the financial side of his work. Moreover, on page 540 I may have given the reader the erroneous impression that this society shortly became inactive, if not defunct. But since the chapter on the Swami's New York work (Chapter Thirteen) was printed I have come across material which has not heretofore been known and which leaves little doubt that the purpose of this society was from the start to foster the Swami's teaching work. The material also establishes the fact that, although in 1895 the Swami worked for the most part independently of an organization, the society continued to exist and later became known as the Vedanta Society of New York. The Swami founded three Vedanta Societies in America: the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894; the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles in the beginning of 1900, which soon became defunct, but on the ashes of which the present Vedanta Society of Southern California has arisen; and the Vedanta Society of San Francisco (now of Northern California) on April 14, 1900. Records of the proceedings of this last society have been preserved from the day of its origin to the present.

Throughout the course of this book I have expressed my debt and my gratitude to those who have contributed their recollections of Swami Vivekananda and who have made available to me material to which I would otherwise have had no access. I would like, however, to express here my particular thanks to Swami Vishwananda, head of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, for having made available to me copies of the letters written by Swami Vivekananda to Miss Isabelle McKindley, three unpublished photographs and other invaluable material; to Mr. John K. Wright for the letters from Swami Vivekananda to his father, Professor John H. Wright, and also for the letters, diary and article written by his mother. My particular thanks are also due to Mrs. Charles Erskine Scott Wood (otherwise known as Sara Bard Field, the American poet), through whose instrumentality Mr. Wright's generous contribution was made possible, and to Mrs. Frances Bagley Wallace for her reminiscences of the Swami. I extend my thanks also to Mr. Mortimer Smith for his interest and his kindness in making much material available to me. My gratitude is due to Mme. Paul Verdier, who has allowed me to reproduce notes of her conversations with Miss Josephine MacLeod and with Mme. Emma Calvé, and to Miss Mary Lou Williams for her thorough search of the Chicago and St. Louis newspapers for articles pertaining to

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Swami Vivekananda and for the material incorporated in this book from the St. Louis journals of 1893, '94 and '95.

I would like also to express my indebtedness and gratitude to the research workers in the libraries of many of those cities which Swami Vivekananda visited during his lecture tour, who in all instances have given me their courteous and indispensable assistance. My heartfelt thanks go particularly to my friend, John A. Gault of the New York Public Library, for the many photostats he contributed at his own expense and for his time, interest and help. My thanks are also due to Mr. F. Kretzschmar of the Information Service, Inc. of Detroit for the articles his bureau unearthed for me in the Detroit newspapers. I am indebted also to all the American newspapers from whose files I have gathered the bulk of my material.

For permission to quote excerpts from published books I take pleasure in expressing my acknowledgment and gratitude to the following:

The American-Scandinavian Foundation for quotations from "The Life of Ole Bull" by Mortimer Smith;

E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc. and J. M. Dent of London for quotations from "New England: Indian Summer 1865-1915" by Van Wyck Brooks;

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Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. for a quotation from "The Mauve Decade" by Thomas Beer;

Charles Scribner's Sons for a quotation from "Heads and Tales" by Malvina Hoffman;

Mr. Henry Stanton Monroe for quotations from "A Poet's Life" by Harriet Monroe;

Udbodhan Office, Calcutta, for quotations from "The Master As I Saw Him" by Sister Nivedita;

The John C. Winston Company for a quotation from "John D. Rockefeller" by B. F. Winkleman;

Yale University Press for a quotation from "The American Mind" by Henry Steele Commanger.

I have also quoted freely from articles published in *Prabuddha Bharata* and *Vedanta Kesari* (English language periodicals of the Ramakrishna Order) for which I express my thanks.

I am also deeply indebted to all those who have generously supplied the photographs for this book, and I have acknowledged this

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debt in the List of Illustrations. I would like, however, to mention here those to whom I am particularly grateful in this regard. But before doing so I should say a word about the photographs themselves. In gathering them I had a twofold aim in mind. First, I wanted to include only those photographs of Swami Vivekananda which pertain to the period under discussion and which heretofore have not generally been known. Second, I wanted to present pictures of the places where the Swami lived and worked and of the people he knew and loved and who helped him during his American visit, for I have good reason to believe that his devotees have long hankered for such visual reports. Unfortunately, but unavoidably, several of the photographs which I have been able to collect are dimmed by time, but I hope that nonetheless the reader will derive some satisfaction from them. It gives me pleasure to offer my particular thanks to Mr. John K. Wright for the photograph of his mother, Mrs. John Henry Wright, and that of his father, Professor John Henry Wright, who played such an important part in the Swami's American mission. My special thanks are extended also to Mrs. Herbert E. Hyde for the photographs of the members of the Hale and McKindley families whom Swamiji so deeply loved.

Finally, to those members of the Vedanta Society of Northern California who have helped me in various ways in the preparation of this book—such as typing, reading, correcting my manuscript and preparing the glossary—and who have given me their unfailing encouragement and their indispensable advice, my undying gratitude.

In giving these thanks and making these acknowledgments, I do so not alone on my own behalf but on that of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, to which I have given the full rights to this book, including the rights of translation. I should add, however, that although the Vedanta Society of Northern California has accepted this book, the opinions expressed within its pages are mine and do not necessarily represent or reflect those of the Society.

In conclusion I would like to say that both the Vedanta Society of Northern California and I are indebted to the Advaita Ashrama for its offer to publish the present volume.

San Francisco
October 22, 1957

M. L. B.

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MRS. OLE BULL — 441
Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

MRS. OLE BULL'S RESIDENCE AT 168 BRATTLE STREET, CAMBRIDGE — 465
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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PALM (reduced) — 569
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THE BELUR MATH — 632
Courtesy of the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, India

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Courtesy of the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, India

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA
NEW DISCOVERIES

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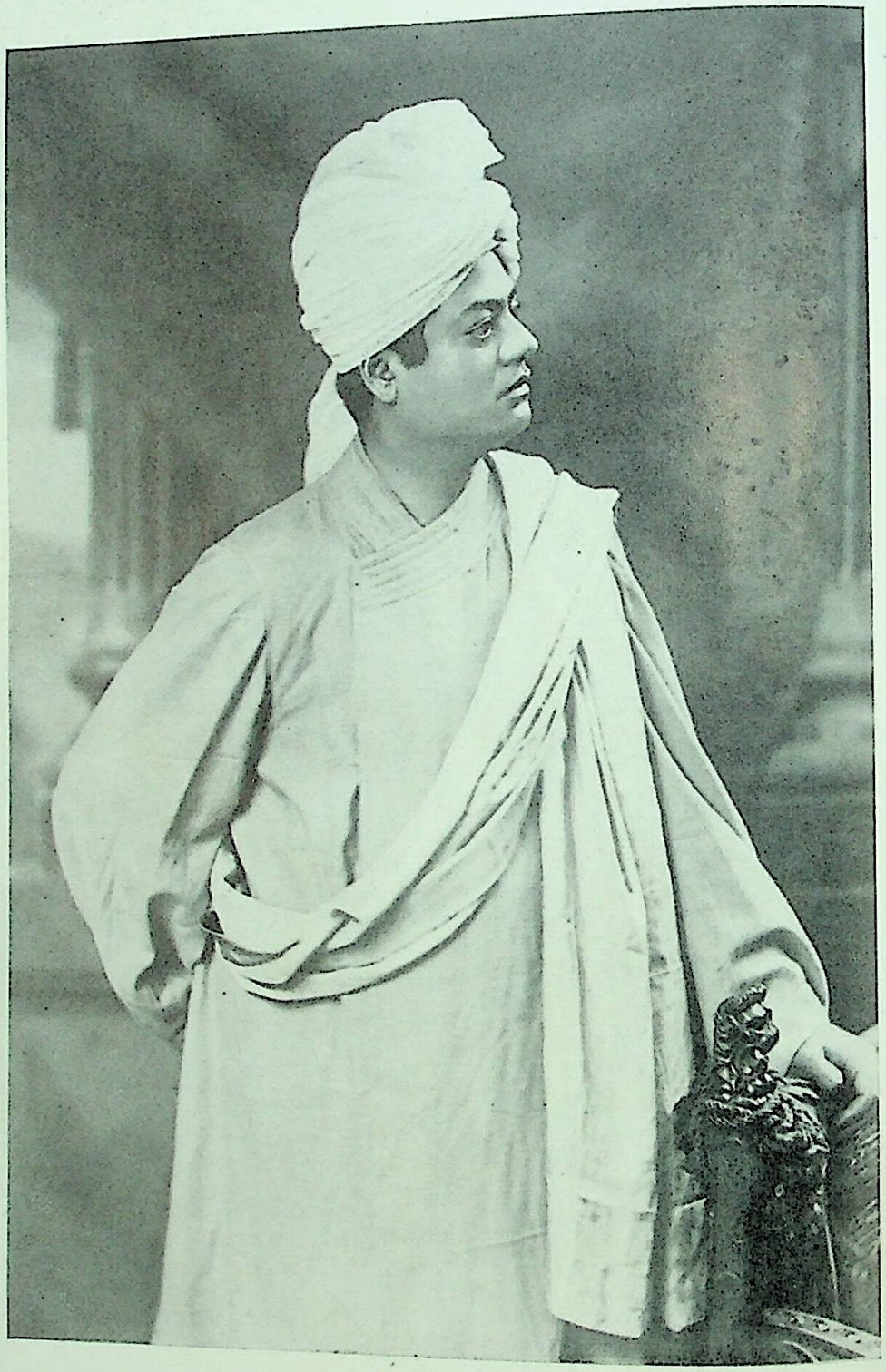

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PROLOGUE

I

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA was born in Calcutta on January 12, 1863. His family, the Dattas of the Kayastha (Kshatriya) caste, was a wealthy and aristocratic one, long known for its charity, learning and spirit of independence. The Swami's father, Vishwanath Datta, was an attorney in the High Court of Calcutta, a position which, together with his inherited fortune, made it possible for his family to live in luxury. Out of his ample means Vishwanath gave to all who asked, supporting many of his relatives—worthy and unworthy alike. The Swami's mother, Bhuvaneshwari Datta, was of an equally generous nature. She cheerfully managed the large household, composed not only of her five children but of her husband's relatives, and somehow in the midst of her duties found time for the study of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, from both of which she could recite long passages and both of which she taught to her children. Thus Narendra Nath Datta, as Swami Vivekananda was known in his youth, was blessed with noble parents, even as they were blessed with a son whose influence was to usher in a new age.

Narendra as a child was, to say the least, difficult to manage. Impelled by a brilliant and energetic mind, he had a capacity for action and mischief that knew no limit. At times he would become uncontrollably restless, as though Lord Shiva, the Great God, the Absolute, to whom confinement was an outrage, dwelt in his small body. It is said that his mother's only remedy for his turbulent outbursts was to pour a pitcher of cold water over the child's dark head, repeating loudly the while the name of Shiva. At once Naren would grow calm and thoughtful, the clouds would disperse and soon his ordinarily joyful disposition would come to the fore. After such emergencies, Bhuvaneshwari Datta would sigh: "I prayed to Shiva for a son and He has sent me one of His demons!"

But tempestuous as he was, Naren from early childhood had a predilection for meditation. He would play at it, sitting in yoga posture, and often play-acting would pass into deep self-forgetfulness. The boy also had an innate fondness for wandering monks who would

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come by the house for alms, and, to the despair of his parents, would regularly give them everything he could lay his hands on—bauble or heirloom. The device of locking Naren in his room whenever monks approached was of small avail, for from his window objects of all sorts would come showering down to the feet of the sadhus.

As a boy Narendra was the favorite of old and young alike and a leader among his contemporaries, who willingly deferred to his greater imagination and courage in the invention and execution of elaborate games and pranks. But as Naren grew older his unlimited energy began to turn more and more from wild and furious playing to the pursuit by day of intellectual activity and by night of serious meditation, which came to him naturally and which brought spiritual visions to him, even in his early youth.

In 1877, when Naren was fourteen, his father found it necessary to move the family for a period of two years to Raipur in the Madhya Pradesh. In Raipur, where there was no school, Naren had time to become intimately acquainted with his father, whose scholarship and openmindedness had led him, along with other Hindus, into a suspicion of his own cultural heritage and had bred within him an agnosticism typical of the age. Vishwanath gave careful attention to his son, training his keen intellect and directing his attention to the study of Western culture and knowledge, which in that day was considered to be the very acme of learning.

When Narendra's family returned to Calcutta in 1879, he entered the Presidency College and, later, the General Assembly's Institution, founded by the Scottish General Missionary Board. Never content with the offered curriculum, he read independently an untold number of books, acquiring during his college life a thoroughgoing grasp of Western philosophy, history, art, literature—even some science and medicine. His powers of reading and of retention were little short of miraculous. Being able to consume and digest a weighty tome in a short time, he never again forgot a detail of it. As a result there were many branches of Western learning, as well as of Eastern, in which he was well versed.

But Naren's concern was not with accumulating a fund of knowledge, but rather with discovering ultimate truth. A more shallow mind would have remained content with, or been frustrated by, the agnosticism to which Western philosophy and science pointed. His thirst for a direct knowledge of reality, however, was profound and not to be put off by the well-acknowledged fact that it could not be

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acquired through the intellect or the senses. On the one hand, his spirit rebelled against the degrading and cheap philosophy of "I can't know," and on the other hand, it was impossible for him to accept on mere faith a doctrine that his own logic or his own experience could not verify. The result was mental torment and continual search.

During this period Narendra became a member of the Brahmo Samaj, a society which was at the time the spearhead of a reform movement among the Hindus. Its position was both modern and orthodox. While it advocated many social reforms and protested against the old tenets of orthodox Hinduism, such as polytheism, image worship, the doctrine of Divine Incarnations and the need of a guru, or spiritual teacher, it decried at the same time modern atheism and taught a belief in and worship of a monotheistic God, a formless God with attributes. In the doctrines of the Brahmo Samaj and also in its leader, Keshab Chandra Sen, young Bengal saw hope for a modernized Hinduism. With characteristic energy and enthusiasm, Naren identified himself with a branch of the Samaj led by Vijay Krishna Goswami and heartily concurred in its attempts to sweep away the incrustations of the ages. He accepted the doctrine of a formless God with attributes, but unlike other Samajists, desired to *know* Him, as it were, face to face, for to him religion was of as little use as was intellectual learning if it did not bring him into direct contact with the very heart of reality.

Naren was now eighteen, well built, of startling attractiveness, strong and independent intellect and sparkling wit. He was an accomplished singer and a fascinating conversationalist whose moods could vary from the profound to the playful. His actions always guided by a highly developed moral sense, he observed the utmost purity in his life—an effortless, innate purity which was never dampening. Indeed, wherever Naren went he was the center of interest and gaiety and was loved and respected by all. It would have been a simple matter for him to reach the heights of worldly power and fame. Yet so restless was his spirit for an intimate knowledge of God that had he thought it necessary to renounce the world to attain it, he would gladly have done so. But how to know God? Was it possible to know Him? "Sir," he asked Devendra Nath Tagore, who was looked upon as one of the best spiritual teachers of the time, "have you seen God?" Instead of answering, Devendra Nath blessed him and said: "My boy, you have the yogi's eyes." Again and again Naren

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asked the question, putting it to the leaders of various religious sects in Calcutta, to pundits, to preachers who spoke of God, of salvation, of holiness. The answer, given truthfully, for the young questioner was so sincere, was always, in effect, "No."

It was during this period of restless search for God that Naren, in November of 1881, first met Sri Ramakrishna in a house of one of the latter's devotees, Surendra Nath Mitra. The Master, at once attracted to the young man whose eyes seemed not on this world, and deeply moved by his singing, invited him to visit Dakshineswar.

II

The story of Swami Vivekananda's life cannot be complete without the story of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, for the two lives formed, as it were, one whole. Yet, in this short account, only a little can be told about him. Sri Ramakrishna, born in 1836, is today held by thousands or, more accurately, millions to have been a Divine Incarnation who harmonized within himself all the spiritual thought and experience of the world's past. Living quietly on the bank of the Ganga at the Dakshineswar temple, Sri Ramakrishna remained in an almost continuous state of God-consciousness, sometimes losing himself utterly in the Absolute Brahman, sometimes, in a slightly lower state, communing with the Personal God in one or another of His, or Her, infinite forms, sometimes, again, perceiving this world of multiplicity shot through and through with the unifying substance of Divinity. His power was that which only the Incarnations of God possess—the power of bestowing, by a touch or a glance, the vision of God and of removing by a wish the accumulated burden of karma from the souls of all who come to them. This power of forgiveness and of granting salvation, to speak in Christian terms, was part and parcel of Sri Ramakrishna's nature. Childlike in the utter purity of his heart, he eagerly gave God-vision to pundit and illiterate peasant alike, granting his tremendous and liberating grace to all who came to him and were ready to receive it. To those who were not ready—for the sudden inflowing of God's grace can shatter a small or cracked vessel—he gave the power of self-preparation and the assurance that it would in short time bear fruit. The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who combined in himself a vast intellect and an unbounded compassion, who was, in fact, cosmic in heart and mind, were unique both in their all-

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THE DAKSHINESWAR TEMPLES

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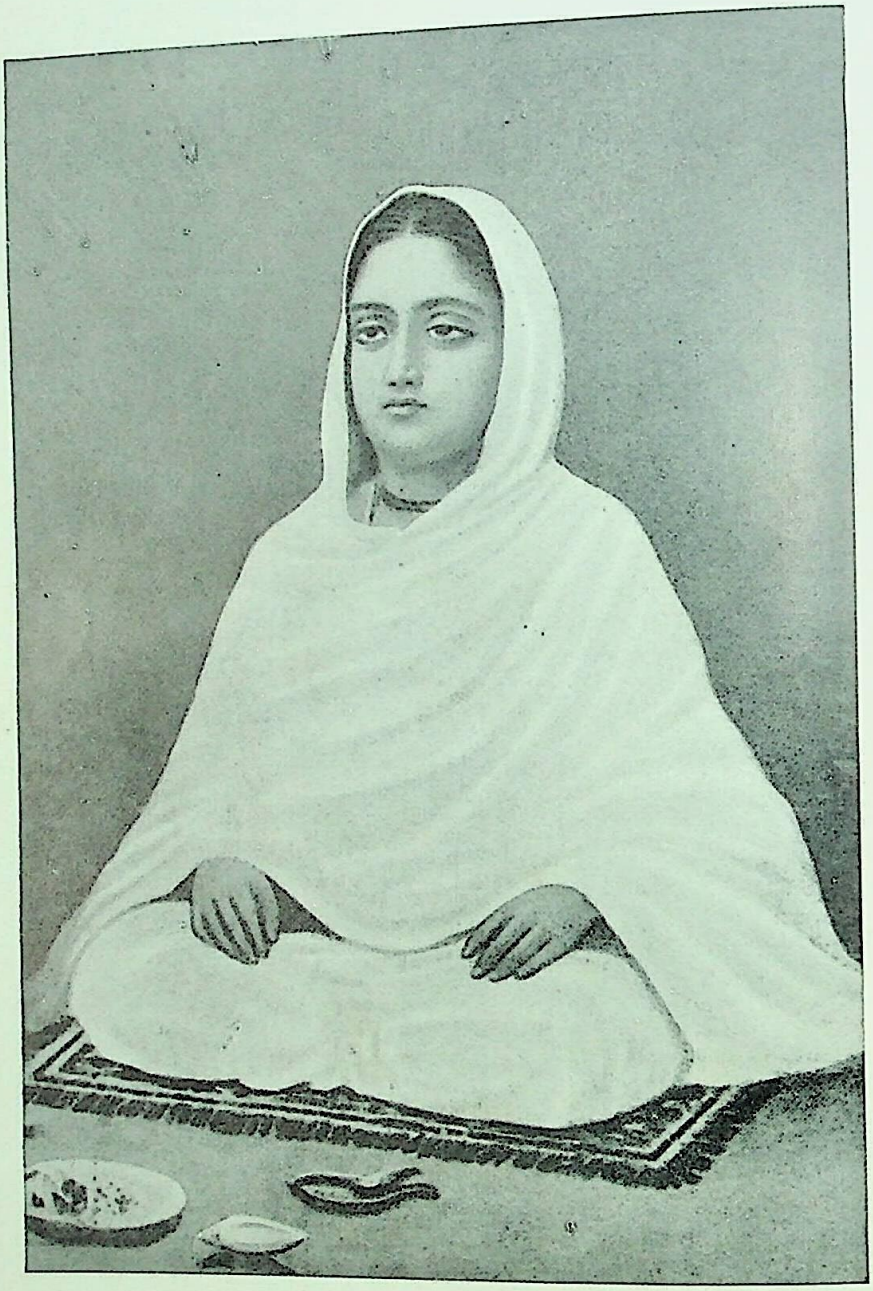

RANI RASMANI

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inclusiveness and in their insistence upon the ability of man to know God directly and in this life.

The first part of Sri Ramakrishna's life was spent in undergoing extreme austerities and engaging in a multiplicity of spiritual practices. There was no religious path which he did not quickly follow to its destination and none which he found invalid. Thus he became a living verification of the fact—new to the world—that all religions, if practiced earnestly, lead to the Godhead. He became also an unerring guide, for he was intimately acquainted with the landmarks and pitfalls of each spiritual road, and knowing at a glance the heart and mind of everyone who came to him, he was able to mold and quicken the life of each along the line best suited to his nature.

The last years of Sri Ramakrishna's life, from the latter part of 1879 to August of 1886, were spent in giving intensive training to a group of close disciples, who were later to become men of extraordinary spirituality and purity, apostles fit to transmit the teachings and power of their Master to the world.

It was around the end of 1881, two years after Sri Ramakrishna had entered upon his life of teaching, that Narendra, in company with friends, first visited Dakshineswar and again met the Master. It was a momentous meeting and one which dumbfounded the young seeker of truth, for Sri Ramakrishna, instantly recognizing Naren's inherent spiritual greatness, spoke to him in ecstatic, reverential terms, as though greeting a beloved, long absent god. Taking him aside, he poured forth his welcome: "Ah! you have come so late! How unkind of you to keep me waiting so long! My ears are almost seared listening to the cheap talk of worldly people. Oh, how I have been yearning to unburden my mind to one who understands my inmost feelings!" Telling of the incident at a later time, Naren related: "And so he went on raving and weeping. The next moment he stood before me with folded palms and showing me the regard due to a god, said, 'I know, Lord, thou art that ancient Rishi Nara, a part of Narayana, who has incarnated himself this time to remove the miseries and sufferings of humanity.' "

Speechless, Naren regarded Sri Ramakrishna as stark mad and this welcome as an example of his ravings. Yet after the Master had extorted from him a promise to return in a few days and had led him back to the group of devotees, there remained no trace of madness in his behavior. He spoke and acted normally; indeed, he radiated a sense of profound peace and spiritual joy. It was then that Naren

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asked his usual question: "Sir, have you seen God?" The answer was given at once: "Yes, I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense. God can be realized; one can see and talk to Him as I am doing with you." Naren, deeply impressed, felt that these extraordinary words came from the depths of an inner experience. They were not the words of a madman nor of a mere preacher. They were words that could not be doubted. He saw, moreover, that the holy man's life of utter renunciation was in perfect consonance with his teachings, that he was truly a great saint to be revered. Yet how to reconcile this with the strange and extravagant greeting he had received? In a state of bafflement and confusion, Naren returned to Calcutta.

He could not erase from his mind, however, the feeling of peace that had come over him as he had sat near the Master. Yet, busy with one thing and another, he did not return to Dakshineswar for nearly a month. During his second visit he had an even stranger experience. After greeting him in his room and bidding him sit beside him on his bed, Sri Ramakrishna drew near him in an ecstatic mood and placed his right foot on his body. At this touch Naren saw, with eyes open, the walls, the room, the temple garden, the whole world and even himself disappearing into a void. He felt sure that he was facing death and cried in consternation, "What are you doing to me? I have my parents!"

The Master laughed and touched Naren's chest, restoring him to his normal mood. "All right, let it rest now," he said. "Everything will come in time."

Versed in Western learning, Naren was convinced that Sri Ramakrishna had exerted a hypnotic influence over him. Yet the question remained how a madman could hypnotize so strong a mind as was his. Deeply perplexed, yet deeply attracted, he soon returned for a third visit, determined to hold his own. But this time he fared no better. By a mere touch the Master again caused him to lose all outward consciousness. Referring to this incident, Sri Ramakrishna later said: "I put several questions to him while he was in that state. I asked him about his antecedents and where he lived, his mission in this world and the duration of his mortal life. He dived deep into himself and gave fitting answers to my questions. They only confirmed what I had seen and inferred about him. Those things shall be a secret, but I came to know that he was a sage who had attained perfection, a past master in meditation, and that the day he knew

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who he really was, he would give up the body, by an act of will, through yoga."

From first to last, Sri Ramakrishna could not praise Naren highly enough. He had not been speaking rhetorically when he had called him "Lord—the incarnation of Narayana." His feeling for his young disciple bordered almost on reverence, so deeply aware was he of Naren's godlike nature. Again and again he spoke of him in ecstatic terms: "Behold! Here is Naren. See! See! Oh, what power of insight he has! It is like the shoreless sea of radiance! The Mother, Mahamaya, Herself, cannot approach more than within ten feet of him!" At another time he said: "He has eighteen extraordinary powers, one or two of which are sufficient to make a man famous in the world." Again, "He is a blazing, roaring fire consuming all impurities to ashes."

Through all this, Naren remained dubious, thinking the Master to be blinded by the intensity of his love. His intellect, moreover, forbade him to accept Sri Ramakrishna's strange doctrines—the doctrine, for instance, of monism, which claimed that all was really Brahman, or God. From the point of view of the Brahmo Samaj this was blasphemy. Sri Ramakrishna's belief in the living existence of innumerable forms of God and in their manifestation in images was equally blasphemous, if not downright superstitious. Even the Master's visions and superconscious experiences were looked upon by Naren with the eye of the skeptic—not the shallow skeptic who disbelieves merely because he does not understand, but one who insists that truth be known with his whole being before he will accept it as valid. Naren could never abrogate his reason for the sake of finding comfort in an easy faith. Thus for more than four years he fought his Master, torn between the obvious genuineness of Sri Ramakrishna's sainthood and his own refusal to accept as true anything that his experience did not verify.

Throughout those years Naren visited Dakshineswar often, drawn by his love for his guru. Those days spent at the feet of the Master in company with other disciples were golden ones. Sri Ramakrishna trained his boys with a light though unerringly sure touch. In times of laughter and play, in serious discussion, in moods of spiritual ecstasy, even in the everyday routine of eating and sleeping, he transformed life into a festival. The commonplace became extraordinary, and the slightest happening, a spiritual lesson. In so brief a sketch as this, little justice can be done to Narendra's discipleship at Dakshineswar, and to the reader who is unfamiliar with the story I can only recom-

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mend that he turn to the biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, particularly to "Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master," and to "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna," for therein he will find a new and luminous dimension to this world—indeed he will find a new world altogether.

Gradually Narendra's doubts disappeared. Engaging in arduous spiritual exercises under the careful eye of his guru, he proved by his own experience the truth of many of Sri Ramakrishna's claims. At the same time his intellect expanded into what might be called, for lack of a better word, "superintellect," in the light of which many contradictions that had plagued him were solved and many apparent fallacies were seen as higher truths.

But before Narendra surrendered completely to Sri Ramakrishna he was to undergo a bitter experience. In the early part of 1884 he took his Bachelor of Arts examinations. Shortly thereafter, while he was spending the evening at the home of friends, news came of the sudden death of his father from a heart attack. The shock was a stunning one, for Naren was deeply devoted to his parents. But the full extent of the loss did not become apparent until several days later, when it was discovered that Vishwanath Datta, who all his life had freely given of his wealth to all who asked, had left his family not only penniless but burdened with debt.

The following months were a nightmare. Naren, whose life had always been one of physical comfort, now found himself without funds and the sole support of his mother, two elder sisters, two younger brothers and sundry relatives. Creditors knocked at the door; there was seldom enough to eat; clothes became threadbare, and, on top of all, a branch of the Datta family claimed part of the old mansion—the best part—as rightfully theirs. The claim was unfounded, but the case was brought to the law courts, where it dragged on and on. Although it was finally decided in favor of Naren's family, it created in its course much unpleasantness, publicity and suspense.

In the meantime Naren sought everywhere for work. "Even before the period of mourning was over," he later told, "I had to knock about in search of a job. Starving and barefooted, I wandered from office to office under the scorching noonday sun with an application in hand, . . . everywhere the door was slammed in my face." Those who had previously toadied to members of the Datta family now scorned them. As for Narendra's true friends, few knew the state to which he had been reduced, for out of self-respect he said nothing. At

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first his faith in God's mercy, which had grown strong in him since his contact with Sri Ramakrishna, remained firm, but soon in the face of the misery of his own family, which made vivid to him the sufferings of helpless millions throughout the world, his faith turned to doubt.

One evening toward the end of the summer, after the rains had begun, Naren was returning home from a day of fruitless job-hunting. Weak with hunger and unable to take a step farther, he sank down by the roadside. Perhaps he slept for a time; perhaps he only lapsed into a semiconscious state, but suddenly a change began to take place within him. Deep below the surface of his mind he felt that the veils of uncertainty and confusion were being removed one after the other. Theological problems, which were always more to him than mere intellectual puzzles, became automatically solved, and the meaning of the ways of God with man were clearly revealed. He knew also, with a sure knowledge that sprang from the depths of his being, that he must renounce the world.

Sri Ramakrishna, however, aware of all that had taken place within his disciple, asked him not to take up the life of a wandering monk for as long as he himself might live. It was not to be long. But during the last year that remained of the life of the Master, Naren, after having provided for his family with the help of a fellow disciple, underwent innumerable spiritual practices. He quickly attained height after height of spiritual experience and reached at last the final goal of all spiritual endeavor: the complete identification of the individual soul with the Absolute Brahman. But he was not destined to remain immersed in that state.

"Now then," the Master said to him after his attainment of monistic experience, "the Mother has shown you everything. Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realization you have just had be locked up and the key shall remain with me. You have work to do. When you will have finished my work, the treasure-box will be unlocked again."

In the last few days of Sri Ramakrishna's earthly life he entrusted the care and training of his other disciples—themselves all boys of profound spirituality—to Naren's hands and imparted to him his final instructions. Then, aware that he was to enter into Mahasamadhi—the last merging into the Absolute from which there is no return to the physical body—and that his days of teaching were over, he transmitted to this greatest of his apostles all the spiritual powers that

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he had acquired through years of austerity and experience. On August 16, 1886, Sri Ramakrishna passed away.

III

The grief of the young disciples, together with the pressure their families exerted upon them to return to their homes and live a "normal" life, might have disbanded them, had it not been for Narendra's burning enthusiasm and determination to hold them together. Before long, one of Sri Ramakrishna's householder devotees arranged to support the boys in a place of their own choosing. They chose a dilapidated and reputedly haunted two-story house in Baranagore, midway between Calcutta and Dakshineswar. The young apostles, informally initiated by Sri Ramakrishna into sannyasa, now took formal vows in the presence of one another, and the Sri Ramakrishna Order came into being. The story of Baranagore is the story of fifteen young men of total renunciation caught up in a fervor of spiritual longing. In dire poverty but caring nothing for sleep, food or proper clothing, the boys, led by Naren, spent hour upon hour in meditation, worship, study and devotional singing. The spirit of Sri Ramakrishna flowed through them as a constant and sustaining power, and through Naren they seemed again to hear his words and receive his guidance and inspiration.

The traditional ideal of monasticism in India is that of the wandering monk who lives homeless and in complete reliance upon God. The monks of the Baranagore Math were torn between a desire for this life of utter freedom and a desire to hold together as the sons of Sri Ramakrishna. Now and then, one or another would leave the monastery for a month or two. Even Naren, restless for complete independence, made several solitary pilgrimages, only to return, drawn back by his sense of responsibility to his brothers. But in 1888 he decided to break away from Baranagore, not only that his own strength and fearlessness might grow but that his brothers might also learn to stand alone.

The story of the next four years is that of Naren's solitary wanderings throughout India. Several chapters of his biography are devoted to his experiences during that time, but even so the story is somewhat disconnected and incomplete, for the Swami rarely spoke in any detail either of his inward spiritual experiences or of his outward

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trials and triumphs. Suffice it to say that, sometimes living in complete isolation and want, sometimes sharing the meals of the destitute villagers, sometimes being entertained by rajas and pundits, he strode the length and breadth of his country, plumbing the life of the people to its depths. At the end of four years he was able to say to his brother monk, Swami Turiyananda, whom he had met at Mount Abu, "I don't know what I have attained, nor do I care. I know only that my heart has expanded greatly, and I feel that if I could relieve the suffering of one soul by going to hell a hundred times, I would do it."

At the southernmost tip of India, Cape Comorin, the Swami's pilgrimage throughout his motherland culminated in a long and deep meditation, during the course of which, according to one of his brother monks to whom he confided the story, he had a profound and revealing spiritual experience. The actual content of this experience we do not know, but the Swami himself has told of his thoughts as he sat on a rock that jutted out into the ocean. He saw, as it were, the whole of India—her past, present and future, her centuries of greatness and also her centuries of degradation. He saw that it was not religion that was the cause of India's downfall but, on the contrary, the fact that true religion, the very life and breath of her individuality, was nowhere to be found, and he knew that her only hope was a restatement of the lost spiritual culture of the ancient rishis. His mind encompassing both the roots and the ramifications of India's problem, and his heart suffering for his country's downtrodden, poverty-stricken masses, he "hit," as he later wrote, "upon a plan."

"We are so many sannyasins wandering about and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion'? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.

". . . Suppose some disinterested sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandala, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools, . . . and they will gain nothing by reading poetry

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and all that sort of thing. We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

"To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. . . ."

This was, of course, a revolutionary idea of the function of a sannyasin in India and was to bring about the new type of monasticism that has since been established by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

In the latter part of 1892 the Swami first heard of the Parliament of Religions, which was to be held in Chicago the following year. His friends and followers urged him to attend it and to represent Hinduism, offering to raise money for his fare and expenses. The Swami himself felt a deep urge to go to America, not so much to represent Hinduism as to obtain financial help and thus put his plan into operation. His final decision to undertake the trip, however, was not made until April of 1893 when, having prayed for guidance, he received, as he later told, "a Divine Command." Thus assured that the proposed journey was sanctioned by God, Swami Vivekananda, of whom Sri Ramakrishna had once said: "The time will come when he will shake the world to its foundations through the strength of his intellectual and spiritual powers," left behind all that was dear and familiar to him and, on May 31, 1893, set sail for America. After stopping in China and Japan, he crossed the Pacific, and disembarked in Vancouver. From there he went by train to Chicago, where he arrived toward the end of July.

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CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT

I

Until now, the information we have had regarding the weeks between the midsummer of 1893, when Swami Vivekananda arrived in America, and the opening of the Parliament of Religions in September of the same year, has been scanty and derived largely from one or two letters which he wrote to India. In "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" it is told that when he arrived in Chicago in late July to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions he was not only totally unknown in America and unequipped with any kind of credential, but too late to register as a delegate to the Parliament even if he had credentials. The Parliament of Religions, moreover, was not scheduled to open until September 11. Thus, even to attend it as a spectator Swamiji had several weeks to wait in a strange land where, as he writes in a letter to India, "The expense . . . is awful." In order to lessen this expense, he left Chicago for Boston where he had been told the cost of living was lower. "Mysterious," write his biographers, "are the ways of the Lord!" ; for it was on the train from Chicago to Boston that Swamiji met "an old lady" who invited him to live at her farm, called "Breezy Meadows," in Massachusetts. It was through this providential woman, of whom we shall hear more later, that he met Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard. Professor Wright, at once appreciative of Swamiji's genius, persuaded him, despite his reluctance to return to Chicago because of his meager funds, of the importance of attending the Parliament of Religions. Dr. Wright made all the necessary arrangements and introduced him as a superbly well-qualified delegate—one who, like the sun, had no need of credentials in order to shine. Indeed, had it not been for Dr. Wright's insistence and help, it is doubtful that Swamiji would have attended the Parliament.

The little more that has been known regarding the pre-Parliament period of Swamiji's life has been pieced together from the letter quoted above and dated August 20, 1893. We have known, for instance,

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that during his stay at "Breezy Meadows" his hostess showed him off as "a curio from India," that he was gaped at for his "quaint dress," that he was on this account going to buy Western clothes in Boston, that he was to speak at "a big ladies' club . . . which is helping Ramabai," and that he visited and was deeply impressed by a women's reformatory. To these facts more now can be added, particularly in regard to the period between August 20 and September 8, which until now has been virtually a blank.

Wherever Swamiji went he made news, and in my attempt to fill in the gaps in his life's story I assumed that New England was no exception to this rule and that the papers of those towns which he visited in the pre-Parliament days would contain some mention of him. The nearest town to the farm "Breezy Meadows" is Metcalf, but upon making inquiries I found that Metcalf was too small to possess a newspaper. The town next in size is Holliston, still not large enough to support a paper of its own, and the next large is Framingham, a full-sized town, complete with newspaper office. It was to Framingham, therefore, that I went. In those days, the *Framingham Tribune*, which covered the noteworthy events of the surrounding country, was a weekly, coming out on Fridays. There being but few papers to look through, it was not difficult to find the following item which, small as it was and in spite of its quaintness, or perhaps because of it, had the impact of reality:

Friday, August 25, 1893

> Holliston: Miss Kate Sanborn, who has recently returned from the west, last week entertained the Indian Rajah, Swami Vivikananda. Behind a pair of horses furnished by liveryman F. W. Phipps, Miss Sanborn and the Rajah drove through town on Friday en route for Hunnewell's.

What a sight that must have been! And who could help mistaking the young monk for a rajah as, in robe and turban, he was regally driven through the quiet New England village behind a pair of trotting horses, the mistress of "Breezy Meadows" at his side? This took place on Friday, August 18. On the following Sunday, Swamiji writes to India that he is going to Boston to buy Western clothes. "People gather by hundreds in the streets to see me. So what I want is to dress myself in a long black coat, and keep a red robe and turban to wear when I lecture."

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Above: "Breezy Meadows"; *Below*: Wesley Church, Salem, Mass.

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KATHERINE ABBOTT SANBORN

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From the above news item we learn for the first time that the name of Swamiji's hostess was Miss Kate Sanborn. Miss Sanborn was, no doubt, taking her "curio from India" on a social call to Hunnewell's, an estate some ten miles from "Breezy Meadows." But, as Swamiji writes resignedly, ". . . all this must be borne." Indeed, it was through the sociability of Kate Sanborn and her pardonable delight in showing off her "Rajah" that Swamiji met Dr. Wright and subsequently the whole of America. Amiable, prominent and gregarious, Miss Sanborn was precisely the person to act as hostess to Swamiji in those early days, for she not only introduced him to Dr. Wright but was instrumental in providing him with a well-rounded preview of the American scene.

Further research regarding Miss Sanborn revealed that, aside from being an enthusiastic hostess, she was a lecturer and author, taking for her topics all the numerous facets of her active life—people, incidents, places. Although Swamiji referred to her as "an old woman," she was, by American standards, not old when he first knew her. She was fifty-four and very energetic. She was possessed of a lively humor and a warm feeling for the human show, was keenly observant and widely known for her repartee. Even in her correspondence her wit was bubbling and irrepressible. It was her practice to include in her letters short and apt verses scribbled on cards. One of these, sent to a group of young women, advises: "Though you're bright/And though you're pretty/They'll not love you/If you're witty." A more serious and thoughtful side of her nature is revealed by another card which reads: "Down with the fallacy enshrined in Senator Ingalls' sonnet on the one opportunity. She comes, not alone in the gospel of the 'second opportunity,' but she is with you every day and hour waiting for recognition."

Originally from New Hampshire, Kate Sanborn had bought one of the old abandoned farms of Massachusetts and had proceeded to restore it into "Breezy Meadows." Two of her books are devoted to her life on the farm, and it is from these that one learns of the scene that greeted Swamiji. She writes lovingly of the pines and silver birches, the huge elms growing near the house, the natural pond of waterlilies, and the two brooks where forget-me-nots grew along the shaded banks. The house itself was a rambling farmhouse with a vine growing over half the roof. There is a picture of it in one of her books: a friendly, comfortable house. There is also a picture of Kate Sanborn herself (older than when Swamiji knew her) standing in her front doorway

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offering a welcome to one and all. Today "Breezy Meadows" has changed; part of the farm has been given over to a camp for Negro boys and another part is occupied by a seminary for Xavier priests; the old buildings have been torn down and the big trees are gone.

II

In the letter that Swamiji wrote to India at this time, he mentions, as has already been noted, that he is to speak before a women's club which was helping Ramabai. Ramabai, of whom we shall hear more in a later chapter, was a Hindu woman who had been converted to Christianity. In 1887-1889 she had been active in forming clubs in America for the purpose of raising funds for Indian child widows, whose plight she had graphically misrepresented. Unfortunately I could find no report in the Boston papers of Swamiji's talk before the Boston Ramabai Circle. Nor was the 1893 Annual Report of that club more informative. But despite the meagerness of our information, we can at least be sure, in the light of subsequent developments in the Brooklyn Ramabai Circle which will be reported in a later chapter, that Swamiji gave the women of the Boston Ramabai Circle a true picture of India and of child widows and that it was a picture which they did not relish.

The first direct mention of Swamiji in the Boston papers is tucked away in the "Personal" column of the *Evening Transcript* of August 23, 1893:

> Swami Virckananda of India, a Brahmin monk who is on his way to the parliament of religions to be held at Chicago in September, is the guest of Miss Kate Sanborn at her "abandoned farm" in Metcalf, Mass. Last evening he addressed the inmates of the Sherborn Reformatory for Women upon the manners, customs and mode of living in his country.

Sherborn is a small town near "Breezy Meadows." From Swamiji's letter to India we know of the impression this reformatory made upon him. "It is the grandest thing I have seen in America," he writes. Perhaps, when he spoke before them, the inmates thought that *he* was the grandest thing *they* had seen in America. At any rate, it is safe

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to assume that their response was more sympathetic than that of the Ramabai club. And in some cases it may have been profound and transforming. One cannot know, but the young Hindu monk, luminous in his red robe and yellow turban, must have been like a sunburst in that grey prison, so startling that perhaps through him some saw the path to true freedom.

The next mention of Swamiji in the Boston papers is found in the "Personal" column of the *Boston Evening Transcript* of Friday, August 25, and reads as follows:

> The Swami Vere Kananda of India, the Brahmin monk who was in this country for the purpose of attending the parliament of religions at Chicago next month, arrived in Boston yesterday, in company with Mr. F. B. Sanborn of Concord.

Mr. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn was a cousin of Kate Sanborn and was at first openly skeptical of her "Hindu saint." He nonetheless paid a visit to meet Swamiji at "Breezy Meadows," where his attitude at once underwent a change. He no doubt took keen delight in Swamiji's company, and Swamiji in turn must have welcomed his. He was a well-known journalist, author and philanthropist, extremely active in organizing and promoting works of benevolence. He served as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Charities—the first of its kind in America—and helped in founding many charitable institutions. He also founded the Concord Summer School of Philosophy and wrote biographies of his friends, Alcott, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and others. As will be seen later, Mr. Sanborn invited Swamiji to speak at a convention of the American Social Science Association in Saratoga Springs, New York—the fashionable resort of the era.

But prior to going to Saratoga Springs, Swamiji passed a busy week and a half in Massachusetts. While he was spending Thursday, August 24, with Mr. Sanborn in Boston, Professor John Henry Wright, anxious to meet the phenomenal Hindu monk, of whom he had no doubt heard a great deal from the Sanborns, was on his way to Boston from Annisquam, a small resort village on the Atlantic seaboard. Through some misadventure, this meeting did not take place. Yet perhaps this was no misadventure at all, but the hand of Providence, for, not to be deprived of meeting Swamiji, Professor Wright invited

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him to spend the week-end at Annisquam. It was during this week-end that the professor formed the opinion of his guest that was to have such far-reaching consequences. A letter written by Mrs. Wright to her mother, which has recently come to light, tells of the occasion:

Annisquam, Mass.
August 29, 1893

My dear Mother:

We have been having a queer time. Kate Sanborn had a Hindoo monk in tow as I believe I mentioned in my last letter. John went down to meet him in Boston and missing him, invited him up here. He came Friday! In a long saffron robe that caused universal amazement. He was a most gorgeous vision. He had a superb carriage of the head, was very handsome in an oriental way, about thirty years old in time, ages in civilization. He stayed until Monday and was one of the most interesting people I have yet come across. We talked all day all night and began again with interest the next morning. The town was in a fume to see him; the boarders at Miss Lane's in wild excitement. They were in and out of the Lodge constantly and little Mrs. Merrill's eyes were blazing and her cheeks red with excitement. Chiefly we talked religion. It was a kind of revival, I have not felt so wrought up for a long time myself! Then on Sunday John had him invited to speak in the church and they took up a collection for a Heathen college to be carried on on strictly heathen principles—whereupon I retired to my corner and laughed until I cried.

He is an educated gentleman, knows as much as anybody. Has been a monk since he was eighteen. Their vows are very much our vows, or rather the vows of a Christian monk. Only Poverty with them means poverty. They have no monastery, no property, they cannot even beg; but they sit and wait until alms are given them. Then they sit and teach people. For days they talk and dispute. He is wonderfully clever and clear in putting his arguments and laying his trains [of thoughts] to a conclusion. You can't trip him up, nor get ahead of him.

I have a lot of notes I made as stuff for a possible story—at any rate as something very interesting for future reference.

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PROF. JOHN HENRY WRIGHT

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MRS. JOHN HENRY WRIGHT

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We may see hundreds of Hindoo monks in our lives—and we may not.

Aside from its importance in opening Swamiji's way to the Parliament of Religions, this week-end lastingly enriched the Wright family—as well it might have, for none fortunate enough to have Swamiji as a guest soon forgot him. The memory of this and later meetings—of which there will be more in a following chapter—became a part of the Wright family tradition, and Mr. John Wright, the son of Professor and Mrs. Wright, through whose kindness his mother's letters and journals have been made available, today still speaks in the family idiom of "Our Swami," though he was but a child of two when Swamiji first came to Annisquam.

Mrs. Wright did indeed compose a story from her notes, a story which has been found among her papers. In regard to it, Mr. Wright tells us that "sometime in or after 1897, she prepared the account from the original notes, which have disappeared. She either typed it herself or had it typed by a stenographer and then thoroughly revised it in ink." Mr. Wright's deduction regarding the date of the manuscript is based on the fact that the typewriter on which it was written did not come into the family until 1897.

When we first received a copy of this manuscript, it seemed both familiar and new, and on comparing it with material in "The Life," we found, to be sure, that some portions of it had already been published. On pages 416-419 of the fourth edition, readers will find an article which is said to have come from a newspaper and which is a very much abridged version of the same story. Mr. Wright was not aware that his mother had contributed her article to a newspaper, and it is not known where or when it first appeared; but inasmuch as we are now in possession of the complete manuscript, this is of little importance. The unpublished portions comprise a good half of the original article and are, I believe, of absorbing interest, for they give an intimate picture of Swamiji from the pen of one who well understood that her subject was no ordinary person. But perhaps it is a picture that might also prove shocking. Mrs. Wright has caught Swamiji in one of his bursts of fire, hard for some to reconcile with his calm, all-compassionate, all-loving nature. Fire and compassion, however, are not disparate—indeed they often are as inseparable as the two sides of one coin. Swamiji's heart, one never can forget, was full of unhappiness for the suffering of his motherland, and corre-

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spondingly his mind was full of anger against all that contributed to her degradation. In the early days he ascribed a great deal of that degradation to the imperialism of the British, and it was only natural that he would lash out against a people who had ruthlessly crushed those whom he loved. It is well known that when Swamiji later met the English people on their home ground he became an ardent admirer of their many noble characteristics, but nonetheless he never changed his opinion of British imperialism nor, for that matter, of any oppression of one people by another. Swamiji was a thorough student of the world's history, and whenever in the story of man's life he found injustice and inhumanity he never hesitated to point them out in no uncertain terms.

However, here are the unpublished portions of Mrs. Wright's article. For the sake of clarity and continuity I have here and there retained portions which have already been quoted in "The Life," and, for the same reason, I have omitted a word or phrase here and there and made a few minor corrections.

According to Mrs. Wright's story, the Annisquam villagers and the boarders at the Lodge first caught sight of Swamiji as, in company with Professor Wright, he crossed the lawn between the boarding-house and the professor's cottage. So astonishing a sight did Swamiji present in this quiet little New England village that speculations set in at once as to who this majestic and colorful figure might be. From where had he come? What was his nationality? And so forth. The article continues as follows:

> . . . Finally they decided that he was a Brahmin, and the theory was rudely shattered when that night, at supper, they saw him partake, wonderingly, but evidently with relish, of hash.
>
> It was something that needed explanation and they unanimously repaired to the cottage after supper, to hear this strange new being discourse. . . .
>
> "It was the other day," he said, in his musical voice, "only just the other day—not more than four hundred years ago." And then followed tales of cruelty and oppression, of a patient race and a suffering people, and of a judgment to come! "Ah, the English," he said, "only just a little while ago they were savages, . . . the vermin crawled on the ladies' bodices, . . . and they scented themselves to disguise the

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abominable odor of their persons. . . . Most hor-r-ible! Even now, they are barely emerging from barbarism."

"Nonsense," said one of his scandalized hearers, "that was at least five hundred years ago."

"And did I not say 'a little while ago'? What are a few hundred years when you look at the antiquity of the human soul?" Then with a turn of tone, quite reasonable and gentle, "They are quite savage," he said. "The frightful cold, the want and privation of their northern climate," going on more quickly and warmly, "has made them *wild*. They only think to kill. . . . Where is their rel-igion? They take the name of that Holy One, they claim to love their fellowmen, they civilize—by Christianity!—No! It is their hunger that has civilized them, not their God. The love of man is on their lips, in their hearts there is nothing but evil and every violence. 'I love you my brother, I love you!' . . . *and all the while they cut his throat*! Their hands are *red* with blood." . . . Then, going on more slowly, his beautiful voice deepening till it sounded like a bell, "But the judgment of God will fall upon them. 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,' and destruction is coming. What are your Christians? Not one third of the world. Look at those Chinese, millions of them. They are the vengeance of God that will light upon you. There will be another invasion of the Huns," adding, with a little chuckle, "they will sweep over Europe, they will not leave one stone standing upon another. Men, women, children, all will go and the dark ages will come again." His voice was indescribably sad and pitiful; then suddenly and flippantly, dropping the seer, "Me,—I don't care! The world will rise up better from it, but it is coming. The vengeance of God, it is coming soon."

"Soon?" they all asked.

"It will not be a thousand years until it is done."

They drew a breath of relief. It did not seem imminent.

"And God will have vengeance," he went on. "You may not see it in religion, you may not see it in politics, but you must see it in history, and as it has been; it will come to pass. If you grind down the people, you will suffer. We in India are suffering the vengeance of God. Look upon these things. They ground down those poor people for their own

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wealth, they heard not the voice of distress, they ate from gold and silver when the people cried for bread, and the Mohammedans came upon them slaughtering and killing: slaughtering and killing they overran them. India has been conquered again and again for years, and last and worst of all came the Englishman. You look about India, what has the Hindoo left? Wonderful temples, everywhere. What has the Mohammedan left? Beautiful palaces. What has the Englishman left? Nothing but mounds of broken brandy bottles! And God has had no mercy upon my people because they had no mercy. By their cruelty they degraded the populace, and when they needed them the common people had no strength to give for their aid. If man cannot believe in the Vengeance of God, he certainly cannot deny the Vengeance of History. And it will come upon the English; they have their heels on our necks, they have sucked the last drop of our blood for their own pleasures, they have carried away with them millions of our money, while our people have starved by villages and provinces. And now the Chinaman is the vengeance that will fall upon them; if the Chinese rose today and swept the English into the sea, *as they well deserve,* it would be no more than justice."

And then, having said his say, the Swami was silent. A babble of thin-voiced chatter rose about him, to which he listened, apparently unheeding. Occasionally he cast his eye up to the roof and repeated softly, "Shiva! Shiva!" and the little company, shaken and disturbed by the current of powerful feelings and vindictive passion which seemed to be flowing like molten lava beneath the silent surface of this strange being, broke up, perturbed.

He stayed days [actually it was only a long week-end]. . . . All through, his discourses abounded in picturesque illustrations and beautiful legends. . . .

One beautiful story he told was of a man whose wife reproached him with his troubles, reviled him because of the success of others, and recounted to him all his failures. "Is this what your God has done for you," she said to him, "after you have served Him so many years?" Then the man answered, "Am I a trader in religion? Look at that mountain. What does it do for me, or what have I done for it?

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THE RANI OF JHANSI

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And yet I love it because I am so made that I love the beautiful. Thus I love God." . . . There was another story he told of a king who offered a gift to a Rishi. The Rishi refused, but the king insisted and begged that he would come with him. When they came to the palace he heard the king praying, and the king begged for wealth, for power, for length of days from God. The Rishi listened, wondering, until at last he picked up his mat and started away. Then the king opened his eyes from his prayers and saw him. "Why are you going?" he said. "You have not asked for your gift." "I," said the Rishi, "ask from a beggar?"

When someone suggested to him that Christianity was a saving power, he opened his great dark eyes upon him and said, "If Christianity is a saving power in itself, why has it not saved the Ethiopians, the Abyssinians?" He also arraigned our own crimes, the horror of women on the stage, the frightful immorality in our streets, our drunkenness, our thieving, our political degeneracy, the murdering in our West, the lynching in our South, and we, remembering his own Thugs, were still too delicate to mention them. . . .

Often on Swami's lips was the phrase, "They would not dare to do this to a monk." . . . At times he even expressed a great longing that the English government would take him and shoot him. "It would be the first nail in their coffin," he would say, with a little gleam of his white teeth, "and my death would run through the land like wild fire." . . .

His great heroine was the dreadful [?] Ranee of the Indian mutiny, who led her troops in person. Most of the old mutineers, he said, had become monks in order to hide themselves, and this accounted very well for the dangerous quality of the monks' opinions. There was one man of them who had lost four sons and could speak of them with composure, but whenever he mentioned the Ranee he would weep, with tears streaming down his face. "That woman was a goddess," he said, "a *devi*. When overcome, she fell on her sword and died like a man." It was strange to hear the other side of the Indian mutiny, when you would never believe that there was another side to it, and to be assured that a Hindoo could not possibly kill a woman. It was probably the Mohammedans that killed the women at Delhi and Cawnpore.

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These old mutineers would say to him, "Kill a woman! You know we could not do that"; and so the Mohammedan was made responsible.

In quoting from the Upanishads his voice was most musical. He would quote a verse in Sanskrit, with intonations, and then translate it into beautiful English, of which he had a wonderful command. And in his mystical religion he seemed perfectly and unquestionably happy. . . .

It is interesting to compare the prophetic utterances Swamiji made in Annisquam with those reported by Sister Christine in her "Reminiscences": "Sometimes he was in a prophetic mood, as on the day when he startled us by saying: 'The next great upheaval which is to bring about a new epoch will come from Russia or China.'" And I have been reliably informed that at another time Swamiji made a statement to the effect that if and when the British should leave India there would be a great danger of India's being conquered by the Chinese. I mention these statements of Swamiji just in passing, and the reader may accept them in whatever spirit he likes.

Although this memorable and, as it turned out, history-making week-end caused such a stir among the populace in Annisquam, the *Gloucester Daily Times,* which covered the Annisquam news, ran on August 28 the following item, typical of New England's verbal economy:

Annisquam.

Mr. Sivanei Yivcksnanda, a Hindoo monk, gave a fine lecture in the church last evening on the customs and life in India.

But although this was all the newspaper had to say about Swamiji's lecture on August 27, there are even today people to whom its main burden is still fresh and to whom Swamiji is still vivid. One woman, a summer resident of the village, writes to me in regard to Swamiji's week-end in Annisquam: "I consider it a great privilege to have known him. He was a striking looking man in appearance and dress. He wore a turban around his head and a long orange robe of heavy woolen [?] cloth with a wide purple sash. He had a charming voice. He began his lecture in the Annisquam village church by

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saying that the Hindus were taught to have a great respect for other people's religions."

On Monday, August 28, Swamiji left Annisquam for Salem, where he was scheduled to speak before the Thought and Work Club. The only information we have hitherto had of this lecture engagement is a bare reference in Swamiji's "Breezy Meadows" letter. But his stay in Salem was more extensive and active than this brief reference indicates. Recently we have been fortunate enough to find out more about it. The steps leading to this discovery are perhaps of interest.

III

In the spring of 1950, an advertisement in a magazine devoted to antiques was brought to the notice of a student of Vedanta. The advertisement, placed by a Mrs. Prince Woods, offered for sale a trunk and a walking stick which had belonged to Swami Vivekananda. Naturally enough, these articles were sent for, and a request was made for further information regarding them. A correspondence ensued between the Vedanta student and Mrs. Woods, in the course of which the following facts came to light.

In August, 1893, Swamiji had been invited by Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods to stay in her home at 166 North Street, Salem. He remained there a week, during which time he lectured in Salem, was criticized by the clergy (of which more later) and became beloved by Mrs. Woods and her son, Prince, a young medical student. At the end of his visit, Swamiji, intending to return, left behind him his staff and trunk and some other luggage. Of his return Mrs. Prince Woods (the wife of Mrs. Woods' son) writes: "He spent two weeks at the Woods homestead at one time [actually it was one week] and came back from Chicago for another week [?] and to say 'Farewell'. I did not know the family then, but he came with some friends in a carriage and a fine pair of horses just after I met my husband-to-be and was invited there. I just saw him as he said 'Goodbye.'" On leaving this second time, Mrs. Prince Woods tells in another letter, "he gave his staff, his most precious possession, to Dr. Woods who was at that time a young medical student and the only child of Mrs. Woods. To her he gave his trunk and his blanket, saying to them, 'Only my most precious possessions should I give to my friends who have made

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me at home in this great country.'" Mrs. Prince Woods adds, "This was a most gracious gesture after he had been fêted all over the country," and from this one may gather that Swamiji's second visit to the Woods homestead occurred not immediately after the Parliament of Religions, but quite some time thereafter. The staff, trunk and blanket were cherished by the Woods family as mementos of a great soul and a great friend. Dr. Woods, his wife tells us, refused to sell them, "the British Museum offering $200.00 for it [the trunk] early in 1900. . . ." Thus, happily, all three in 1950 were still available. The blanket, which accompanied the trunk and cane, was actually a large, coarsely woven, dark orange shawl, the kind sometimes worn by wandering monks in India.

From the letters of her daughter-in-law we learn that Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods, who was fifty-eight when Swamiji was her guest, was, like Miss Kate Sanborn, an energetic lecturer and authoress. "[She] died July 10, 1910 . . . then 75 years of age, but very youthful in manner and looks, having lecture engagements all over the country. She went to Los Angeles and all over the West Coast not long before she passed on." During her lifetime she wrote "many books," among which were "Hester Hepworth," a story of the witchcraft delusion, "A Fair Maid of Marblehead," "Hidden For Years," and so on. She also wrote and illustrated poetry. Some of her books were for children, toward whom she no doubt felt a special interest, for, during Swamiji's visit, she arranged for him to speak in her garden to a group of local children and young people.

This children's afternoon was by no means due to an underestimation of Swamiji's worth. The Woods family, as did all who came into contact with him, reverenced him. ". . . I never saw the Swami," Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods' daughter-in-law writes (although, as seen above, she had once caught a glimpse of him), "but have felt that I knew him from the many things I have heard of him in the Woods family. My husband . . . spoke of him as . . . of a real Christian gentleman. I have heard that he and Mahatma Gandhi were more Christ-like than any the world has known."

Those who had known Swamiji never tired of discussing him and pondering over the new and awakening ideas which he brought into their lives. Two years later Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the celebrated journalist and poet, who was a friend of Mrs. Woods, writes to her of Swamiji in words which must be akin to those which were often spoken between them. Fortunately, these letters were among those

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which Mrs. Woods' daughter-in-law had preserved, and although they relate to a time subsequent to the one dealt with in this present chapter, I will include them here as not only giving a new glimpse of Swamiji but also as shedding some light on his hostess to whom they were addressed—letters being often as revealing of their recipient as of their author.

May, [1895]

Dear Mrs. Woods:

. . .

Vivekananda is [at] 54 W. 33rd street.

I know it is Consecration to give out—I was *born* knowing that truth, but I think it is a great *blot* on the Consecration when we tell of it—and I am always ashamed after I have told of my own good deeds. Vivekananda says he meets many people who can not be led to talk of any subject that they do not drag in their own charitable acts, how they gave away a dime—or helped some one in need. . . .

May, [1895]

Dear Mrs. Woods:

I was listening to Vivekananda this morning an hour. How honored by fate you must feel to have been allowed to be of service to this Great Soul. I believe him to be the re-incarnation of some great Spirit—perhaps Buddha—perhaps Christ. He is so simple—so sincere, so pure, so unselfish. To have listened to him all winter is the greatest privilege life has ever offered me. It would be surprising to me that people could misunderstand or malign such a soul if I did not know how Buddha and Christ were persecuted and lied about by small inferiors. His discourse this morning was most uplifting—his mere *presence* is that. His absolute sinking of *self* is what I like. I am so tired of people who place the capital 'I' before truth—and God. 'To do good for good's sake—with no expectation or desire of reward, and never to speak of what we have done—but to keep on working for the love of doing God's work'—is Vivekananda's grand philosophy of life. He always makes me feel ashamed that I have ever thought for one moment I was burdened or that I ever spoke of any good act of my own. . . .

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Welcome as was the information regarding Swamiji in Salem, it was incomplete, and in order to add to it a visit to that city was called for. North Street, Salem, wide and shaded, is lined with old frame houses, most of which were standing in 1893. As I walked along looking for 166, I felt that this street, unlike those of larger cities, presented the same aspect that it had to Swamiji—more worn now, it is true, but substantially the same, quiet and comfortably settled into itself. Soon I came to 166, where Swamiji had stayed. It was a small two-story colonial house with a run-down garden at the side and back. Indeed, one could hardly call it a garden; it was a yard with weeds growing in it. But when Swamiji had spoken there, it most likely had been well kept. The house itself, flush with the sidewalk and devoid of the gingerbread of a later period, was in good repair, newly painted and probably but little different in appearance from what it had been when Swamiji left his trunk behind. The name on the front door, however, was not Woods. The Woods family, I learned, had moved away years before, and the present occupant had never heard of a Hindu monk in Salem.

From 166 North Street I found my way to the Essex Institute, where the old Salem newspapers are filed away and where I looked for, found and copied the following articles from the *Salem Evening News* of August 24, 1893, and the *Salem Evening News* and *Daily Gazette* of August 29. It would appear either that the same reporter served both the evening and morning paper or that the evening paper lifted copy bodily from that of the morning. In any case, though repetitive, the three articles are given here respectively, along with their original headlines. Salem journalism in 1893 had its own peculiar charm:

SALEM EVENING NEWS

August 24, 1893

A MONK FROM INDIA

He Will Visit Salem, Monday August 28
and Make an Address

On Monday next a learned monk from India will speak to the members of the Thought and Work Club, telling some-

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thing of his land, its religion and customs. Club members will meet the rajah at Wesley chapel on North street promptly at four o'clock. Gentlemen and ladies who are not members can obtain tickets through some members of the club. The rajah will wear his native costume.

SALEM EVENING NEWS

August 29, 1893

A MONK FROM INDIA

Salem Audience Interested in His Remarks

He has no faith in Missionaries

Explains the Bad Condition of Women in His Land

In spite of the warm weather of yesterday afternoon, a goodly number of members of the Thought and Work club, with guests, gathered in Wesley chapel to meet Swani Vive Kanonda, a Hindoo monk, now travelling in this country, and to listen to an informal address from that gentleman, principally upon the religion of the Hindoos as taught by their Vedar or sacred books. He also spoke of caste, as simply a social division and in no way dependent upon their religion.

The poverty of the majority of the masses was strongly dwelt upon. India with an area much smaller than the United States, contains twenty three hundred millions [sic] of people, and of these, three hundred millions [sic] earn wages, averaging less than fifty cents per month. In some instances the people in whole districts of the country subsist for months and even years, wholly upon flowers, produced by a certain tree which when boiled are edible.

In other districts the men eat rice only, the women and children must satisfy their hunger with the water in which the rice is cooked. A failure of the rice crop means famine. Half the people

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LIVE UPON ONE MEAL A DAY

the other half know not whence the next meal will come. According to Swani Vive Kyonda, the need of the people of India is not more religion, or a better one, but as he expresses it, "practicality," and it is with the hope of interesting the American people in this great need of the suffering, starving millions that he has come to this country.

He spoke at some length of the condition of his people and their religion. In course of his speech he was frequently and closely questioned by Dr. F. A. Gardner and Rev. S. F. Nobbs of the Central Baptist Church. He said the missionaries had fine theories there and started in with good ideas, but had done nothing for the industrial condition of the people. He said Americans, instead of sending out missionaries to train them in religion, would better send some one out to give them industrial education.

Asked whether it was not a fact that Christians assisted the people of India in times of distress, and whether they did not assist in a practical way by training schools, the speaker replied that they did it sometimes, but really it was not to their credit for the law did not allow them to attempt to influence people at such times.

He explained the

BAD CONDITION OF WOMAN

in India on the ground that Hindoo men had such respect for woman that it was thought best not to allow her out. The Hindoo women were held in such high esteem that they were kept in seclusion. He explained the old custom of women being burned on the death of their husbands, on the ground that they loved them so that they could not live without the husband. They were one in marriage and must be one in death.

He was asked about the worship of idols and the throwing themselves in front of the juggernaut car, and said one must not blame the Hindoo people for the car business, for it was the act of fanatics and mostly of lepers.

The speaker explained his mission in his country to be to organize monks for industrial purposes, that they might give the people the benefit of this industrial education and thus elevate them and improve their condition.

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This afternoon Vive Kanonda will speak on the children of India to any children or young people who may be pleased to listen to him at 166 North street, Mrs. Woods kindly offering her garden for that purpose. In person he is a fine looking man, dark but comely, dressed in a long robe of a yellowish red color confined at the waist with a cord, and wearing on his head a yellow turban. Being a monk he has no caste, and may eat and drink with anyone.

DAILY GAZETTE
August 29, 1893

RAJAH SWANI VIVI KANAUDA

Has but Little Faith in the Missionaries
Husbands of India Never Lie, Never Persecute
His Purpose Here to Organize Monks
for Industrial Purposes.

Rajah Swani Vivi Rananda of India was the guest of the Thought and Work Club of Salem yesterday afternoon in the Wesley church.

A large number of ladies and gentlemen were present and shook hands, American fashion, with the distinguished monk. He wore an orange colored gown, with red sash, yellow turban, with the end hanging down on one side, which he used for a handkerchief, and congress shoes.

He spoke at some length of the condition of his people and their religion. In course of his speech he was frequently and closely questioned by Dr. F. A. Gardner and Rev. S. F. Nobbs of the Central Baptist church. He said the

MISSIONARIES HAD FINE THEORIES

there and started in with good ideas, but had done nothing for the industrial condition of the people. He said Americans, instead of sending out missionaries to train them in religion, would better send someone out to give them industrial education.

Speaking at some length of the relations of men and

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women, he said the husbands of India never lied and never persecuted, and named several other sins they never committed.

Asked whether it was not a fact that Christians assisted the people of India in times of distress, and whether they did not assist in a practical way by training schools, the speaker replied that they did it sometimes, but really it was not to their credit, for the law did not allow them to attempt to influence people at such times.

He explained

THE BAD CONDITION OF WOMEN

in India on the ground that Hindoo men had such respect for woman that it was thought best not to allow her out. The Hindoo women were held in such high esteem that they were kept in seclusion. He explained the old custom of women being burned on the death of their husbands, on the ground that they loved them so that they could not live without the husband. They were one in marriage and must be one in death.

He was asked about the worship of idols and the throwing themselves in front of the juggernaut car, and said one must not blame the Hindoo people for the car business, for it was the act of fanatics and mostly of lepers.

AS FOR THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS

he said he had asked Christians what they thought of when they prayed, and some said they thought of the church, others of G-O-D. Now his people thought of the images. For the poor people idols were necessary. He said that in ancient times, when their religion first began, women were distinguished for spiritual genius and great strength of mind. In spite of this, as he seemed to acknowledge, the women of the present day had degenerated. They thought of nothing but eating and drinking, gossip and scandal.

The speaker explained his mission in his country to be to organize monks for industrial purposes, that they might give the people the benefit of this industrial education and thus to elevate them and improve their condition.

Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods, who had founded the Thought and Work Club in 1891, had evidently invited all the Salem clergy to hear

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Swamiji's talk and to question him. But the above-mentioned Dr. F. A. Gardner and Rev. S. F. Nobbs of the Central Baptist Church, who "frequently and closely questioned" Swamiji, did so in no friendly spirit. This we learn from the letters of Mrs. Prince Woods, who writes: "All the ministers were present and none of them appreciated what he said. Several were most critical." And again: "I . . . remember that my mother-in-law . . . many times spoke of the outspoken, narrow attitude of most of the ministers in Salem who openly criticised him in the Pulpit. She had arranged an open meeting in one of the churches and most of the ministers openly accosted him in the most acrimonious manner while he remained gentle in speech and manner." Presumably, this was Swamiji's first encounter with the ministers in America, and while their acrimony left him unperturbed he was no doubt surprised by it.

He spent the following week—August 29 to September 4—at Mrs. Woods' home. On Tuesday afternoon, August 29, he spoke in the garden to the children, and on the evening of the following Sunday, September 3, he lectured at the East Church, whose minister was apparently one of the few who were sympathetic. The *Salem Evening News* of September 1 reported on the first of these events, the *Daily Gazette* of September 5 on the second. Both reports follow, respectively.

TO SPEAK AGAIN

SWAMI VIVA KANANDA, The India Monk, at East Church Sunday Evening

---

The learned Monk from India who is spending a few days in this city, will speak in the East Church Sunday evening at 7-30. Swami (Rev.) Viva Kananda preached in the Episcopal church at Annisquam last Sunday evening, by invitation of the pastor and Professor Wright of Harvard, who has shown him great kindness.

On Monday night he leaves for Saratoga, where he will address the Social Science association. Later on he will speak before the Congress in Chicago. Like all men who are educated in the higher Universities of India, Viva Kananda

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speaks English easily and correctly. His simple talk to the children on Tuesday last concerning the games, schools, customs and manners of children in India was valuable and most interesting. His kind heart was touched by the statement of a little miss that her teacher had "licked her so hard that she almost broke her finger." "We have no corporal punishment in our schools," he said, "none at all." As Viva Kananda, like all monks, must travel over his land preaching the religion of truth, chastity and the brotherhood of man, no great good could pass unnoticed, or terrible wrong escape his eyes. He is extremely generous to all persons of other faiths, and has only kind words for those who differ from him.

SOME SUNDAY SERVICES

Several Ministers Return to September Pulpits
Rajah Rananda at the East Church

Rajah Swani Vivi Rananda of India spoke at the East church Sunday evening, on the religion of India and the poor of his native land. A good audience assembled, but it was not so large as the importance of the subject or the interesting speaker deserved. The monk was dressed in his native costume, and spoke about forty minutes. The great need of India today, which is not the India of fifty years ago, is, he said, missionaries to educate the people industrially and socially and not religiously. The Hindoos have all the religion they want, and the Hindoo religion is the most ancient in the world. The monk is a very pleasant speaker and held the close attention of his audience.

What a difference of feeling there is in these pre-Parliament of Religions lectures from those that came after! Through Swamiji's letters and lectures one can trace his change of attitude through the months in his approach to the American public. He came with the purpose of getting help for India, of telling the American people of his country's real needs and real genius, but he stayed only to give,

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pouring himself out for the sake of Americans, for he could not see hunger in any form, spiritual or physical, without filling it.

Among the papers preserved by Mrs. Prince Woods were two letters written by Swamiji from Chicago a month or so after his first visit to Salem. Although these letters pertain to a later period, they belonged nevertheless to Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods, and as completing the account of Swamiji's stay at 166 North street they are quoted here:

Chicago, 10th October, 1893

Dear Mrs. Tannatt Woods:

I received your letter yesterday. Just now I am lecturing about Chicago—and am doing as I think very well—it is ranging from 30 to 80 dollars a lecture and just now I have been so well advertised in Chicago gratis by the Parliament of religions that it is not advisable to give up this field now. To which *I am sure you will agree.* However I may come soon to Boston but when I cannot say. Yesterday I returned from Streator where I got 87 dollars for a lecture. I have engagements every day this week. And hope more will come by the end of the week. My love to Mr. Woods and compliments to all our friends.

Yours truly,
Vivekananda

(Letterhead)
George W. Hale,
541 Dearborn Avenue,
Chicago.

Nov. 19th 1893

Dear Mrs. Woods—

Excuse my delay in answering your letter. I do not know when I will be able to see you again. I am starting tomorrow for Madison and Minneapolis. The English gentleman you speak of is Dr. Momerie of London. He is a well known worker amongst the poor of London and is a very sweet man. You perhaps do not know that the English church was the only religious denomination in the world who did not send to us a representative and Dr. Momerie came to

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the parliament in spite of the Archbishop of Canterbury's denouncing of the Parliament of religions.

My love for you, my kind friend, and your noble son is all the same whether I write pretty often or not.

Can you express my books and the cover-all to the care of Mr. Hale? I am in need of them, the express will be paid here.

The Blessings of the Lord on you and yours.

Ever your friend,
Vivekananda

P.S. If you have the occasion to write to Miss Sanborn and others of our friends in the east kindly give them my deepest respects.

Yours truly,
Vivekananda

IV

On August 30 Swamiji wrote to Professor Wright in regard to an invitation he had received from Mr. Franklin B. Sanborn to lecture before the American Social Science Association at Saratoga Springs. The following letter was found among Dr. Wright's papers and, together with others that will be included in the course of this story, has been made available to us by his son, Mr. John K. Wright:

Salem
30th Aug '93

Dear Adhyapakji (honorable professor)

I am going off from here today. I hope you have received some reply from Chicago. I have received an invitation with full directions from Mr. Sanborn. So I am going to Saratoga on Monday. My respects to your wife. And my love to Austin and all the children. You are a real *Mahatma* (a great soul) and Mrs. Wright is non parail..

Yours affly
Vivekananda

On August 30 Swamiji evidently did not yet know the decision of the officials of the Parliament of Religions to whom Dr. Wright had

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written. But by September 4, as we see in the following letter, the news had arrived that he had been accepted as a delegate:

Saturday Salem (Sept. 4, 1893)

Dear Adhyapakji—

I hasten to tender my heartfelt gratitude to you for your letters of introduction. I have received a letter from Mr Theles of Chicago giving me the names of some of the delegates and other things about the Congress.

Your professor of Sanscrit in his note to Miss Sanborn mistakes me for Purushottama Joshi and states that there is a Sanskrit library in Boston the like of which can scarcely be met with in India. I would be so happy to see it.

Mr Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on Monday and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding house called Sanatorium If any news come from Chicago in the mean while I hope you will kindly send it over to the Sanatorium Saratoga.

You and your noble wife and sweet children have made an impression in my brain which is simply indelible and I thought myself so much near to heaven when living with you. May He the giver of all gifts shower on your head His choicest blessings.

Here are a few lines written as an attempt at poetry. Hoping your love will pardon this infliction.

Ever your friend
Vivekananda

The poem which Swamiji "inflicted" upon Professor Wright and which heretofore has not been known was very likely the first poem he had written in the English language, and while it is by no means his best it contains, I believe, some of his most beautiful lines. To judge from the original, he dashed it off on letter paper in the flush of inspiration and, making only minor corrections here and there, sent it on to his friend. It is reproduced here just as he wrote it:

O'r Hill and dale and mountain range
In temple church and mosque
In Vedas Bible Al Koran
I had searched for thee in vain

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Like a child in the wildest forest lost
I have cried and cried alone
Where art thou gone my God my love
the echo answered gone

And days and nights and years then passed
A fire was in the brain
I knew not when day changed in night
The heart seemed rent in twain
I laid me down on Ganga's shore
Exposed to sun and rain
With burning tears I laid the dust
And wailed with waters' roar
I called on all the holy names
Of every clime and creed
"Show me the way" in mercy ye
Great ones who have reached the goal

Years then passed in bitter cry
each moment seemed an age
till one day midst my cries and groans
Some one seemed calling me

A gentle soft and soothing voice
that said "my son" "my son"
That seemed to thrill in unison
with all the chords of my soul

I stood on my feet and tried to find
the place the voice came from
I searched and searched and turned to see
round me before behind
Again Again it seemed to speak
the voice divine to me
In rapture all my soul was hushed
Entranced enthralled in bliss

A flash illumined all my soul
the heart of my heart opened wide
O joy O bliss what do I find

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BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT

My love my love you are here
And you are here my love my all

And I was searching thee
From all eternity you were there
Enthroned in majesty

From that day forth where ere I roam
I feel him standing by
O'er hill and dale high mount and vale
Far Far away and high

The moon's soft light the stars so bright
The glorious orb of day
He shines in them His beauty might
reflected lights are they
The majestic morn the melting eve
The boundless billowy sea
In nature's beauty songs of birds
I see through them it is He.

When dire calamity seizes me
The heart seems weak and faint
All nature seems to crush me down
With laws that never bend

Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet
My love, "I am near" "I am near"
My heart gets strong. With thee my love
A thousand deaths no fear
Thou speakest in the mother's lay
that shuts the babies eye
When innocent children laugh and play
I see Thee standing by.

When holy friendship shakes the hand
He stands between them too
He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
And the babies sweet "mama"

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Thou wert my God with prophets old
All creeds do come from thee
The Vedas Bible and Koran bold
Sing thee in harmony

"Thou art" "Thou art" the Soul of souls
in the rushing stream of life
*"Om tat Sat om" Thou art my God
my love I am thine I am thine.

* Tat Sat means that only real existence. [Swamiji's note]

As has been seen, Swamiji left for Saratoga Springs on Monday night to speak before the convention of the American Social Science Association. Mr. Sanborn was at this time Secretary of the Association, which counted among its members eminent and cultured men from all professions, and he no doubt felt that he was offering them a rare treat in the person of Swamiji. Indeed, the fact that he invited a young, unknown Hindu monk to speak before so august an assembly is ample evidence that, like Professor Wright, he highly valued Swamiji's intellectual genius. But although Swamiji spoke three times before the convention and twice at a private home, he characteristically never mentioned in his letters this honor paid to him during his first weeks in America. This omission was probably due to the fact that since the honor had been paid not to Hinduism nor to India but to himself he felt it was not worth mentioning.

The sessions of the American Social Science Association were of course wholly secular. One can get a general idea of their nature through the titles of some of the lectures that were given. Chosen at random, they were: "Compulsory Arbitration," "American Colleges and Their Work," "The Educational Value of the Woman's Paper," "The Education of Epileptics," "Turkey and Civilization," "The Relative Values of the Factors that Produce Wealth," "The Status of Silver," "Recent Progress in Medicine and Surgery," and so on. But Swamiji was well prepared to speak on any subject whatsoever. In keeping with the tone of the convention, he chose for his topics: "The Mohammedan Rule in India," and "The Use of Silver in India." The title of the third talk, given on the evening of September 6, is now unfortunately unknown, and, more unfortunately, the text of none of

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his talks was reported upon. Nevertheless, the newspaper articles which carried accounts of Swamiji's appearances at the convention and at "Dr. Hamilton's" are here reproduced in part. The first two excerpts are taken from the *Daily Saratogian* of September 6, 1893; the third, from the same paper of September 7:

THEIR SCIENCE IS SOCIAL

A Brainy Gathering Elects Its Officers

Able Papers Read at Yesterday's Session—The Education of Epileptic—To Establish Social Science Professorships—The Program for Today is Important.

The second session of the American Social Science association opened in the Court of Appeals room, Town Hall, yesterday morning. . . .

EVENING SESSION

The evening session opened at 8 o'clock, every seat in the room being occupied. The first business on the program was the election of officers. . . .

A paper was read by Hon. Oscar S. Strauss of New York on "Turkey and Civilization," in which he most emphatically denied the general reports that Turkey was an uncivilized country.

The platform was next occupied by Vive Kananda, a Monk of Madras, Hindoostan, who preached throughout India. He is interested in social science and is an intelligent and interesting speaker. He spoke on Mohammedan rule in India.

The program for today embraces some very interesting topics, especially the paper on "Bimetallism," by Col. Jacob Greene of Hartford. Vive Kananda will again speak, this time on the Use of Silver in India.

LOCAL GOSSIP

Swami Vive Kananda, an educated Hindoo who lately arrived in this country from India, is in attendance on the

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social science convention this week and has spoken twice to crowded parlors at Dr. Hamilton's on the manners, customs and beliefs of the people of that wonderful country. He is an entertaining speaker, a highly educated man and his lectures, covering a wide range of topics, were very interesting. He is a striking figure in his oriental costume, and the public are invited to see and hear him at the Institute tonight at seven o'clock sharp. The lecture closes at 7:30.

MONEY WAS THE SUBJECT

Of the Able Paper at the Social Scientists' Session

What President Andrews Said About the Monetary Experiment in India—Other Interesting Papers—The Program for Today.

The second day's session of the American Social Science association opened auspiciously yesterday morning, there being a large gathering.

The addresses and papers all pertained to finance which, especially at this time, proved very interesting. . . . Col. Jacob L. Greene of Hartford, read a paper on "Bimetallism," treating the subject in a very exhaustive manner. A paper by Dr. Charles B. Spahr of New York followed on the status of silver which was attentively listened to. A paper by President E. Benjamin Andrews of Brown University on "The Monetary experiment in India," was a masterpiece for thought and intellectual ability. . . .

At the conclusion of the reading Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk addressed the audience in an intelligent and interesting manner, taking for his subject the use of silver in India.

Within three weeks Swamiji had, as far as we now know, given eleven lectures and gained the respect of some of the leading minds of America. He had, moreover, come into contact with a cross section of American life. He had spoken to the Ramabai Club; he had

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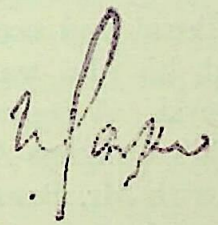
met members of the clergy, the inmates of a prison, the American club woman, and had even talked with the children. He could not have had a better preparation for all that was to come.

Swamiji's last talk before the opening of the Parliament of Religions was given in Saratoga on the evening of September 6. In the *Saratogian* there was an advertisement entitled "Half Rate to the World's Fair," which told of "The excellent Chicago train service on the Delaware and Hudson Railroad." There was a train which left Albany at 4:30 p.m. and arrived in Chicago at 7:55 the following evening. $26.50 round trip. It may well have been this train that Swamiji took on September 8, one way, for the Parliament of Religions, in which case he would have arrived in Chicago on the evening of the 9th, as is indicated in "The Life." There is also the possibility that he returned to Salem on the 7th for his luggage and entrained for Chicago at Boston on the 8th. A third possibility is that he left from Albany on the 7th and arrived in Chicago a day earlier than has been reported. But in any case—whether he departed on the 7th or the 8th—he left behind these quiet but important beginnings to step directly into the limelight that was never to let him go.



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CHAPTER TWO

THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

I

The primary purpose of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was to bring together the fruits of man's material progress. Everything imaginable was on exhibit—not only the achievements of Western civilization but, the better to show these off, life-size models of the more backward cultures of the world. The Fair, however, would not have been complete without a representation of the world's thought. "Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions," edited by Walter B. Houghton, tells us that "the idea of a series of congresses for the consideration of the greatest themes in which mankind is interested, and so comprehensive as to include representatives from all parts of the earth originated with Charles Carroll Bonney in the summer of 1889." Mr. Bonney was a well-known lawyer of that time. From 1890 he had held the position of president of the International Law and Order League and was the author of many important constitutional and economic reforms. His voice being one which was heard, his idea was given wide publicity and was met with general approval. A committee was formed, and on October 30, 1890, the World's Congress Auxiliary of the Columbian Exposition was organized with Mr. Bonney as its president. For the next two and a half years elaborate and complex plans were made, involving an untold number of letters to and from all corners of the earth. The congresses which finally met between May 15 and October 28, 1893, were twenty in all and embraced such things as woman's progress, the public press, medicine and surgery, temperance, commerce and finance, music, government and law reform, economic science, Sunday rest, and—"since faith in a Divine Power . . . has been like the sun, a light-giving and fructifying potency in man's intellectual and moral development"—region. "So numerous," says Houghton, "were these congresses and so extensive the proceedings that *their programmes* bound in one volume constitute an interesting book of 160 pages." (Italics mine.)

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Of these congresses, the Parliament of Religions was by far the most famed and widely heralded. "No one gathering ever assembled," says Barrows in "The World's Parliament of Religions," "was awaited with such universal interest." The Parliament was indeed a unique phenomenon in the history of religions. It is true that throughout the history of India meetings of different religions had taken place; it is also true that before 1893 there had been from time to time ecumenical conventions of Christians and also of Mohammedans. But it can be correctly said that never before had the representatives of the world's great religions been brought together in one place, where they might without fear tell of their respective beliefs to thousands of people. It was an unparalleled meeting, and when first proposed in that day of intolerance and materialism it seemed to many impossible of human achievement. To even a casual observer it might almost appear that some superhuman force was propelling it forward, and one is not surprised to learn that Swamiji, before embarking for America, had said to Swami Turiyananda, "The Parliament of Religions is being organized for this (pointing to himself). My mind tells me so. You will see it verified at no distant date."

This, however, was a motive for organizing the Parliament which had never entered the minds of those who were most instrumental in bringing the religions of the world together. Whatever the divine motives may have been, the human motives lying behind the organization were mixed. Swamiji later wrote in a letter: "The Parliament of Religions was organized with the intention of proving the superiority of the Christian religion over other forms of faith . . ." And again, during the course of an interview, he said, "The Parliament of Religions, as it seems to me, was intended for a 'heathen show' before the world . . ." It has sometimes been thought that Swamiji may have been unfair in this judgment of the Congress which introduced him to the Western world, but a reading of the accounts of both the preparations and the proceedings leaves one without a doubt that the Parliament was permeated with Christian prejudice. That Christianity would gloriously and unequivocally prove its superiority was a foregone conclusion in the minds of many of its promoters.

On the other hand, there were some connected with the Parliament who, having no religious commitments—no religious ax to grind—conceived of it in broader and more realistic terms. To them it was an unprecedented opportunity for promoting understanding and good

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will among all seekers of truth. One of these was President Bonney, of whom Swamiji wrote: "Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he, no clergyman, a lawyer presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches, the sweet, learned, patient Mr. Bonney with all his soul speaking through his bright eyes . . ." Bonney himself described his dream of what the Parliament might accomplish: ". . . I became acquainted with the great religious systems of the world in my youth, and have enjoyed an intimate association with leaders of many churches during my maturer years. I was thus led to believe that if the great religious faiths could be brought into relations of friendly intercourse, many points of sympathy and union would be found, and the coming unity of mankind in the love of God and the service of man be greatly facilitated and advanced." But although it was Bonney's inspiration that lay behind the Parliament, it was actually not he but the Rev. John Henry Barrows, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, who was Chairman of the General Committee and responsible for carrying out the elaborate preparations.

The work of the Committee was voluminous. More than 10,000 letters and 40,000 documents were sent out, and answers from all parts of the globe were received by the bushel. Barrows writes pridefully: "For thirty months nearly all the railroads and steamship lines of the world were unconsciously working for the Parliament of Religions. The post-office clerks at Chicago handled great bundles of letters which had previously passed through the brown fingers of the postal clerks in Madras, Bombay and Tokio." Advisory Councilors were selected from all parts of the world, their number finally reaching 3,000. Among the Councilors chosen from India were G. S. Iyer, Editor of the *Hindu,* B. B. Nagarkar of Bombay, and P. C. Mazoomdar of Calcutta, the last two of whom represented the Brahmo Samaj at the Parliament. The Committee was also in communication with Dharmapala, the General Secretary of the Maha-Bodhi Society in Calcutta, who later became the delegate for the Southern Buddhists of Ceylon, and Muni Atmaramji, High Priest of the Jain community of Bombay.

This abundance of correspondence was not all: articles, lectures, sermons and editorials were written which either extravagantly praised or bitterly condemned the attempt to bring together all the religions of the world. It was through articles in the *Hindu* by its editor, G. S. Iyer, that the plans of the Parliament were made generally

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known in India, and it is probably through this channel that Swamiji, not being affiliated with any sect or organization, came to learn of what was afoot in America.

The task of assembling this unprecedented gathering was not only cumbersome but delicate. The initial action of the Committee, which was appointed in the spring of 1891 and was formed largely of zealous Protestant ministers, was to advise religious leaders of the proposed objectives of the Parliament, which were in brief: "1) To bring together in conference, for the first time in history, the leading representatives of the great Historic Religions of the world. 2) To show to men, in the most impressive way, what and how many important truths the various Religions hold and teach in common. . . . 4) To set forth, by those most competent to speak, what are deemed the important distinctive truths held and taught by each Religion, and by the various chief branches of Christendom. . . . 7) To inquire what light each Religion has afforded, or may afford, to the other Religions of the world. . . . 9) To discover, from competent men, what light Religion has to throw on the great problems of the present age, especially the important questions connected with Temperance, Labor, Education, Wealth and Poverty. 10) To bring the nations of the earth into a more friendly fellowship, in the hope of securing permanent international peace."

At first the responses that flowed in were mostly favorable and enthusiastic. To be sure, a missionary of the Presbyterian Board in India expressed some "misgivings through fear lest the faith we loved and the Saviour we preached might seem to us to be dishonored." But further acquaintance with the plans served to remove these misgivings and to bring about his hearty approval.

In what this further acquaintance consisted may be gathered from a quotation in Barrows' book. "The Christian conviction back of this Parliament," he writes approvingly, "was well expressed by Père Hyacinth in the *Contemporary* for July, 1892: 'It is not true that all religions are equally good; but neither is it true that all religions except one are no good at all. The Christianity of the future, more just than that of the past, will assign to each its place in that work of evangelical preparation which the elder doctors of the church discern in heathenism itself and which is not yet completed.' "

But this patronizing complacence was not enough to remove all misgivings, and as the plans became more widely known, dissent was soon loud and strong. Many Christian journals in America came

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out in decided opposition, largely on the same grounds that had given pause to the Presbyterian missionary, but also out of fear that the Parliament would only aggravate discord. The worst blow of all, however, was struck by the powerful Archbishop of Canterbury, who after due consideration finally wrote in a letter to the Committee: ". . . The difficulties which I myself feel are not questions of distance and convenience, but rest on the fact that the Christian religion is the one religion. I do not understand how that religion can be regarded as a member of a Parliament of Religions without assuming the equality of the other intended members and the parity of their position and claims."

Echoes were heard. For example, a letter from a minister in Hong Kong: ". . . If misled yourself, at least do not mislead others nor jeopardize, I pray you, the precious life of your soul by playing fast and loose with the truth and coquetting with false religions. . . . You are unconsciously planning treason against Christ."

Although the stand of the Archbishop and those like it were criticized by many, the opposition to them was for the most part based on the conviction that, after all, Christianity had nothing to fear. "In my judgment," wrote one bishop in America, "no Christian believer should hesitate one moment to make the presentation of the Religion of Jesus Christ grand and impressive, so that it may make itself felt powerfully in the comparison of religions. . . ." "Who can tell," he went on, "but that the great Head of the Church may, in his providence, make use of this immense gathering to usher in the triumph of his truth, when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow?"

"One result," wrote another bishop, "will be to show that the Christian faith was never more widely or more intelligently believed in, or Jesus Christ more adoringly followed. Civilization, which is making the whole world one, is preparing the way for the reunion of all the world's religions in their true center—Jesus Christ."

Dozens of similar letters flowed in, approving of the Congress for evangelical reasons. Barrows, without the slightest consciousness that these letters were anything but in the spirit of the proposed objectives, added his own voice to them. He found it part of his work in replying to the criticisms of the Parliament to write articles and give many public addresses explaining the Christian and Scriptural grounds on which its defense, as he says, "securely rested," namely, that St. Paul "was careful to find common ground for himself and his

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Greek auditors in Athens, before he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection." "We believe," Barrows went on to say, "that Christianity is to supplant all other religions, because it contains all the truth there is in them and much besides, revealing a redeeming God." Patronization was taken for enlightened brotherly love. "Though light has no fellowship with darkness, light does have fellowship with twilight. God has not left himself without witness, and those who have the full light of the Cross should bear brotherly hearts toward all who grope in a dimmer illumination."

This was as liberal as the Christian ministry could get. There were of course letters and articles which expressed the thought of more open minds. But in Barrows' history, these are in the minority and, significantly, almost all come from the pens of laymen. Representative is the following from Count Goblet d'Alviella, of Brussels: "The significance of such an attempt cannot be too much insisted upon. In opposition to sectarian points of view which identify Religion with the doctrines of one or another particular form of worship, it implies, 1. That religious sentiment possesses general forms and even a sphere of action independent of any particular theology; 2. That men belonging to churches the most diverse can and should come to an understanding with each other in order to realize this program common to all religions."

But views such as this, though they represented a large portion of public opinion, missed the main point as far as the General Committee was concerned. "The Parliament was conceived and carried on," Barrows says, "in the spirit of Milton's faith, that 'though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter?'" Truth, in this instance, was, of course, Christianity; falsehood, every other faith.

While this sort of thing had the effect of allaying the fears of the more bigoted section of the Christian Church (though not those of the Archbishop of Canterbury), it also had the effect of repelling the leaders of other religions. It became necessary for Barrows hastily to assure certain alarmed foreign delegates that "the spirit of kindness and fraternity would prevail in the Parliament."

The General Committee had many a ticklish problem on its hands, and there were some beyond its control. At the last moment, for instance, in the summer of 1893, the Baptists and the Christian

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Endeavor Society withdrew all connections with the World's Fair, the reason being that after long-drawn-out debates, the managers of the Fair had decided that its doors were to remain open on Sundays—a decision which was obviously the work of Satan. The Anglican churches for other reasons also withdrew. Russia refused to send a representative, as did Turkey.

But at length all plans were in order, and on August 11, 1893, the General Committee sent out a request for Universal Prayer "... to the advance of spiritual enlightenment, to the promotion of peace and good will among nations and races, and to the deepening and widening of the sense of universal human brotherhood."

It must be said here that despite the obvious and strong prejudices of a large portion of the Christian ministry, and despite the rampant materialism of the age, thousands of men and women trustingly looked to the Parliament for the fulfilment of the first and broader objectives laid down by the Committee. There was in America a sincere and open-minded search for spiritual truth and an eagerness to welcome it wherever it might be found. But while a profound readiness existed in the American soul for spiritual food, a truly liberal attitude could not, in those days, obtain acceptance among the clergy or the public as a whole. Ironically, however, the Parliament, which could be convened only through a spirit of Christian evangelism, became in spite of itself an instrument for the destruction of bigotry.

II

The Parliament of Religions opened on the morning of September 11, 1893, at the Art Institute of Chicago, which is not to be confused with the "Art Palace"—a temporary though grandiose structure in the Fair Grounds. The Art Institute was a permanent and newly constructed building on Chicago's Michigan Avenue, not yet ready to house the art exhibits for which it was intended. Except for the fact that its many large halls accommodated at various times all the congresses, it had no connection with the Fair, nor did it vanish into smoke as did the Exposition buildings; rather, it stands today, a large stone building of classical design, serving as one of America's finest museums of art. It was in the Institute's great Hall of Columbus that the delegates of the Parliament gathered on that memorable morning.

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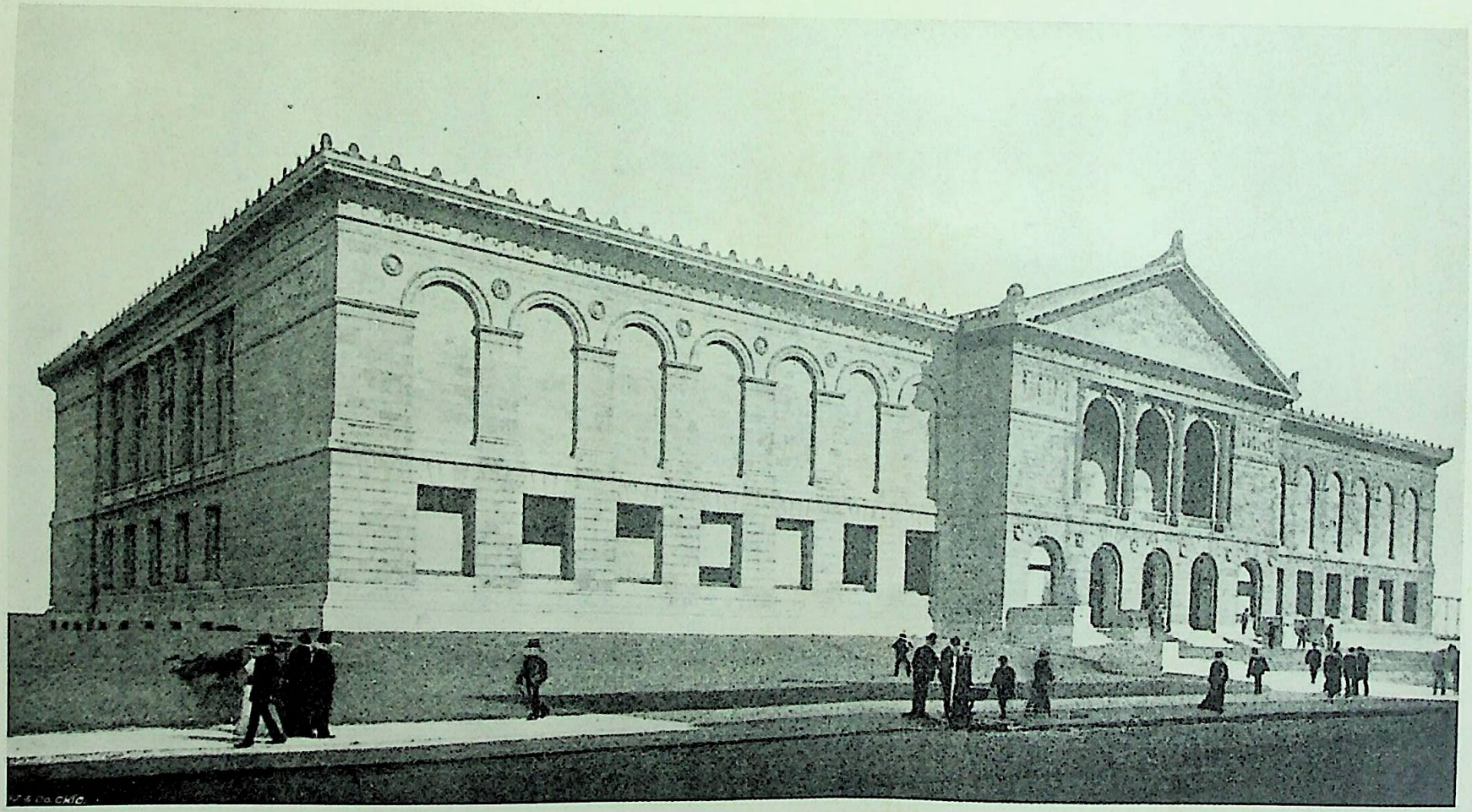

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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At ten o'clock, ten solemn strokes of the New Liberty Bell, on which was inscribed, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another," proclaimed the opening of the Congress—each stroke representing one of the ten chief religions, listed by President Bonney as Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, the Greek Church, and Protestantism. It is not likely, however, that any of the delegates heard this proclamation, for the bell was one of the curiosities of the Fair, and was located at a considerable distance from the Parliament. Nor did the bell serve to summon the spectators. A multitude of people had long since been besieging the doors of the Institute; four thousand had crowded onto the floor and into the gallery of the Hall of Columbus and were waiting in an expectant silence for the delegates to appear. The hush was like that of a church. It is said that this "mass of people was so wonderfully quiet that the flutter of wings was heard when a tiny bird flew through an open window and over the vacant platform."

There is no written description of this platform to be found, but to judge from pictures of the Parliament, it was approximately a hundred feet long, running less than the full width of the auditorium, and about fifteen feet deep. Empty of delegates, it must have presented a somewhat dreary and hodgepodge appearance. Against the back wall, upon which hung what appear to have been a Japanese and a Hebrew scroll, two giant marble statues of Greek philosophers stood some forty feet apart and brooded over the scene. Next to the philosopher on the right a comparatively small and sprightly bronze goddess—possibly the Goddess of Learning—lifted an encouraging hand. But the most extraordinary object was a thronelike chair, made, it is said, of iron, its high back intricately wrought. This chair was centered between the statues and, on this opening day, was reserved for Cardinal Gibbons, the highest prelate of the Catholic Church in America. On either side of the throne, about thirty ordinary wooden chairs stood three rows deep and awaited the delegates, the officials of the Parliament and invited guests. A speaker's rostrum completed the scene.

Not on the opening day, but later, a sign was hung on the front of the rostrum, which read: "No Admittance Except to Authorized Representatives of the Chicago Daily Press." This admonition referred to the pit directly below, in which reporters and official stenographers sat at small tables and recorded the daily proceedings,

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and was no doubt made necessary by the curious and reverent crowds who pressed forward to reach the platform. Indeed, one of the now aged women members of the press (of whom there were but one or two) told not long ago of how crowds used to rush forward to touch the hem of Swamiji's robe, and of how deeply she was impressed by his supreme and unbroken humility in the face of such adulation.

But to return to the vacant platform of the opening day, it had a makeshift air about it, as though someone had unsuccessfully attempted to convey the spirit of universality. It presented a conglomeration of unrelated things and was certainly not what one would call either harmonious or prepossessing. However, as the Reverend Barrows explained in another connection: "It would have been unworthy of the moral dignity, the serious purpose of the occasion, if there had been any attempt at mere pageantry."

Pageantry there was enough without a studied attempt at it. In another part of the building, the delegates, Swamiji among them, were preparing to make their appearance, forming in pairs to walk to the platform. At the appointed hour of ten the group started out. Heading the long procession came President Bonney and Cardinal Gibbons, arm in arm, the Cardinal resplendent in his crimson robes, the President somber and dignified in his morning coat. Following these two were the President and Vice-President of the Board of Lady Managers of the Exposition, Mrs. Potter Palmer and Mrs. Charles H. Henrotin, in silk dresses with puffed sleeves and bustles. The procession slowly and majestically entered the back of the auditorium, the crowd making way for it. Then beneath the flags of many nations and amid wave upon wave of cheers it marched down the center aisle and ascended the platform.

"The sight," says Houghton, "was most remarkable. There were strange robes, turbans and tunics, crosses and crescents, flowing hair and tonsured heads." Cardinal Gibbons sat in the center of the group on the iron throne. On his right were the five Buddhist priests of China in their long, flowing white robes, and on his left, the black-garbed patriarchs of the old Greek Church, "wearing strangely formed hats, somber cassocks of black, and leaning on ivory sticks carved with figures representing ancient rites." The First Secretary of the Chinese Legation in Washington, who had been deputed by the Emperor of China to present the doctrine of Confucius, wore robes of a mandarin. His pictures show him sitting bolt upright, squarely facing the audience with immense dignity and looking somewhat like a huge

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Chinese doll with a round and moonlike face. To quote again from Houghton: "The high priest of the state religion of Japan was arrayed in flowing robes, presenting the colors of the rainbow. Buddhist monks were attired in garments of white and yellow; . . . the Greek Archbishop of Zante, from whose high head-gear there fell to the waist a black veil, was brilliant in purple robe and black cassock, and glittering as to his breast in chains of gold. Dharmapala, ['whose slight, lithe person was swathed in pure white, while his black hair fell in curls upon his shoulders'] was recognized in his woolen garments; and in black clothes hardly to be distinguished from European dress, was Mazoomdar, author of the 'Oriental Christ.'" The closing sentence of an eyewitness account by the Rev. Mr. Wente (from which the above bracketed quotation regarding Dharmapala is taken) is worth quoting here to complete the picture: "The ebon-hued but bright faces of Bishop Arnett, of the African Methodist Church, and of a young African prince, were relieved by the handsome costumes of the ladies of the company, while forming a somber background to all was the dark raiment of the Protestant delegates and invited guests."

In the midst of this impressive array sat Swamiji, conspicuous, according to all accounts, for his "orange turban and robe," or, as better put by the Rev. Mr. Wente, for his "gorgeous red apparel, his bronze face surmounted with a turban of yellow."

This, then, was the scene on the platform. Facing it was the vast audience of men and women, filling every seat of the floor and gallery and comprising representative intellects of the day, both clerical and secular. "Such a scene," writes Houghton, "was never witnessed before in the world's history." Swamiji later wrote, "My heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up." And it is little wonder, for he had suddenly found himself surrounded on all sides by solemn and august personages in full regalia, who represented the religious thought of the whole world. Although, as was told in the preceding chapter, he had spoken to small gatherings in America, never before had he seen, let alone addressed, such a crowd as this.

Suddenly the great organ in the gallery burst forth with the strains of the "Doxology," and the entire assembly arose to sing: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost." There were more verses, and one can be sure that the hall resounded. At the end of the hymn a deep silence was

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sustained by the uplifted hand of the Cardinal. Then into this impressive hush he began the words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father who art in heaven . . ." and every voice in the hall joined with his. "The supreme moment of the nineteenth century," says Houghton, "was reached."

The Parliament of Religions had begun. Seventeen days of continual speech-making, morning, afternoon and evening, followed. Each session was attended by an audience that, big to start with, grew in volume as time went on until by the fourth day the crowd became so great that it overflowed into the neighboring Hall of Washington, where the entire program was repeated word for word. On the fifth day, however, the Scientific Section of the Parliament was opened, and thenceforth the spectators were divided between the Parliament proper and this adjunct, in which the more erudite papers—those dealing with the science of religion—were read. As is known, Swamiji spoke at the Scientific Section on several occasions, and one cannot help wondering if the diversion of the crowd from the Hall of Columbus was not, in part at least, due to his presence rather than to the presentation of the science of religion.

One fortunate thing about the Parliament, which may be noted here, was that it was held in the early autumn, when the days were no longer stifling hot. With the exception of that overcrowded fourth day, when the temperature rose to 95°, and of a morning toward the end of the Parliament when it fell to 39°, the days, as far as temperature went, were mild. It was windy, however, and sometimes it rained. Indeed, such a storm blew one evening that rain was driven into the building, forcing many to protect themselves with umbrellas, and pounded on the roof with such a roar that often the speakers' voices were drowned out.

The first day of the Parliament was devoted to speeches of welcome from the officials and responses by the delegates. There were seven of the former, delivered in high oratory and consuming a large part of the morning session, which was concluded with eight short speeches of response. To some of the latter the audience was wildly demonstrative. The first delegate to speak was the Archbishop of Zante, representative of the Greek Church, who expressed the sentiment that "all men have a common Creator and consequently a common Father in God," and concluded with, "I raise up my hands and I bless with heartfelt love the great country and the happy, glorious people of the United States." "This is indeed glorious!"

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cried President Bonney, and the audience burst into prolonged cheering. Mazoomdar, the representative of the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta, who had been in America ten years before and was known to many, was also loudly cheered. But the expressions of welcome given to Pung Kwang Yu "were surpassed in the case of no other speaker on the platform," says Barrows. "Men and women rose to their feet in the audience, and there was wild waving of hats and handkerchiefs." This not because the audience was in sympathy with Confucianism, but because, as President Bonney had said in his introductory remarks, "We have not treated China very well in this country."

To judge from a quotation from the *St. Louis Observer* of September 21, 1893, which is reproduced in Barrows' book, Dharmapala, the Buddhist from Calcutta—whom Swamiji later spoke of as "a nice boy"—somewhat startled the public. "With his black, curly locks thrown back from his broad brow, his keen, clear eye fixed upon the audience, his long brown finger emphasizing the utterances of his vibrant voice, he looked the very image of a propagandist, and one trembled to know that such a figure stood at the head of the movement to consolidate all the disciples of Buddha and to spread 'the light of Asia' throughout the civilized world."

Through all this, as is known, Swamiji remained seated, meditative and prayerful. It was not until the afternoon session, after four other delegates had read their prepared speeches, that he arose to address the Congress and, through it, the world. The electric effect on the audience of the first words Swamiji spoke is well known. Both Barrows and Houghton comment on the fact that "when Mr. Vivekananda addressed the audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' there arose a peal of applause that lasted for several minutes," and Swamiji himself tells us that "a deafening applause of two minutes followed . . ." Another reference to this incident comes from Mrs. S. K. Blodgett, who much later became Swamiji's hostess in Los Angeles. "I was at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893," she once told. "When that young man got up and said, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' seven [?] thousand people rose to their feet as a tribute to something they knew not what. When it was over I saw scores of women walking over the benches to get near him, and I said to myself, 'Well, my lad, if you can resist that onslaught you are indeed a God!' " (It is told in "The Life" that the

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night following the opening day of the Parliament Swamiji, a guest at the time in a luxurious home, wept from the depths of his heart over the poverty and suffering of the Indian masses. This was his reaction to the fame and power that were suddenly his.)

As has been seen, however, the crowds had not sat glum and silent until he spoke: they had cheered a few others vociferously. As far as spiritual perceptiveness was concerned, this audience was an average one, its spiritual yearnings moving invisibly, even to itself, beneath layers of material tradition. This was not India, where greatness has but one meaning—spiritual greatness—and where, when it is seen, it is understood. The audience of the Parliament, as a whole, could not have known, as Mrs. Blodgett says, precisely why it cheered for Swamiji at his very first words. In other cases there had been obvious reasons: political or religious sympathy, previous knowledge of the speaker, or atonement for national sin. In Swamiji's case there was nothing like this, nor could the applause have been inspired by his words alone, for sentiments of universal brotherhood had been given voice throughout the whole morning and half the afternoon. Rather, it was inspired by Swamiji himself and by something unspoken that came through his words, making them not sentiment but fact and recalling some long-forgotten sense of spiritual unity in the hearts of the people—a recollection that would henceforth work in its secret but ineluctable way to change the face of civilization and bring about a true harmony of religions. If for nothing else—and actually there was little else—it was for this, as Swamiji had said, that the Parliament was convened. But few at the time were aware of it.

Four talks followed Swamiji's address before the opening day came to a close, making, throughout the morning and afternoon sessions, twenty-four talks in all. And now that the foreign delegates and the American people had greeted one another the serious business of the Parliament could begin.

III

There are several contemporaneous descriptions and appreciations of Swamiji quoted in "The Life" from various journals and periodicals such as the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *Rutherford American*, the *Interior Chicago* and the *Critic* (called in "The Life" the *New York*

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Critique). Also one of the finest appraisals comes, as readers will remember, from the Hon. Mr. Merwin-Marie Snell, President of the Scientific Section. Swamiji's devotees are familiar with these, but in the belief that they never tire of hearing of him from eyewitnesses, I think it will perhaps not be amiss, before continuing with the story of the Parliament, to give here a few word pictures of him that have not previously been known. Perhaps the most interesting of these comes from the pen of the well-known poetess, the late Harriet Monroe, who was for many years editor of *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse,* through whose pages she introduced many of America's now famous poets. Miss Monroe attended the World's Fair in 1893, and years later in her autobiography, "A Poet's Life," recorded her impressions of the Parliament of Religions and of Swamiji:

> The Congress of Religions was a triumph for all concerned, especially for its generalissimo, the Reverend John H. Barrows, of Chicago's First Presbyterian Church, who had been preparing it for two years. When he brought down his gavel upon the "world's first parliament of religions" a wave of breathless silence swept over the audience—it seemed a great moment in human history, prophetic of the promised new era of tolerance and peace. On the stage with him, at his left, was a black-coated array of bishops and ministers representing the various familiar Protestant sects and the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; at his right a brilliant group of strangely costumed dignitaries from afar—a Confucian from China, a Jain from India, a theosophist from Allahabad, a white-robed Shinto priest and four Buddhists from Japan, and a monk of the orange robe from Bombay.
>
> It was the last of these, Swami Vivekananda, the magnificent, who stole the whole show and captured the town. Others of the foreign groups spoke well—the Greek, the Russian, the Armenian, Mazoomdar of Calcutta, Dharmapala of Ceylon—leaning, some of these upon interpreters. Shibata, the Shinto, bowed his wired white headdress to the ground, spread his delicate hands in suave gestures, and uttered gravely with serene politeness his incomprehensible words. But the handsome monk in the orange robe gave us in perfect English a masterpiece. His personality, dominant,

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magnetic; his voice, rich as a bronze bell; the controlled fervor of his feeling; the beauty of his message to the Western world he was facing for the first time—these combined to give us a rare and perfect moment of supreme emotion. It was human eloquence at its highest pitch.

While it is gratifying to read descriptions from the pen of a poet, poets themselves are often beset with what is known as poetic melancholy at the evanescence of perfection. In this case it was a melancholy not justified. Miss Monroe goes on to add:

> One cannot repeat a perfect moment—the futility of trying to has been almost a superstition with me. Thus I made no effort to hear Vivekananda speak again, during that autumn and winter when he was making converts by the score to his hope of uniting East and West in a world religion above the tumult of controversy. . . .

Another picture of Swamiji comes from the *Chicago Advocate* of September 28, 1893. The fact that the *Advocate* was not entirely favorable to Swamiji, as will be seen later, perhaps makes this description all the more valuable. Although this report refers to the second week of the Parliament, the description is no doubt also applicable to the opening day:

> In certain respects the most fascinating personality was the Brahmin monk, Suami Vivakananda with his flowing orange robe, saffron turban, smooth-shaven, shapely, handsome face, large, dark subtle penetrating eye, and with the air of one being inly-pleased with the consciousness of being easily master of his situation. His knowledge of English is as though it were his mother tongue. . . .

The correspondent of the *Boston Evening Transcript* found a way to meet the delegates of the Parliament behind the scenes, and it is to him that we owe a more intimate description of Swamiji. A sentence or two from his article published in the *Transcript* on September 30, 1893, has been quoted in "The Life," but I will nonetheless include the whole of it here:

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THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

THE HINDUS AT THE FAIR

Some Interesting Personalities at the Parliament of Religions . . . Plain Talk of Leading Heathens.

(Special Correspondence of the *Transcript*.)

Chicago, Sept. 23.

There is a room at the left of the entrance to the Art Palace marked "No. 1—keep out." To this the speakers at the Congress of Religions all repair sooner or later, either to talk with one another or with President Bonney, whose private office is in one corner of the apartment. The folding doors are jealously guarded from the general public, usually standing far enough apart to allow peeping in. Only delegates are supposed to penetrate the sacred precincts, but it is not impossible to obtain an "open sesame," and thus to enjoy a brief opportunity of closer relations with the distinguished guests than the platform in the Hall of Columbus affords.

The most striking figure one meets in this anteroom is Swami Vivekananda, the Brahmin monk. He is a large, well-built man, with the superb carriage of the Hindustanis, his face clean shaven, squarely moulded regular features, white teeth, and with well-chiselled lips that are usually parted in a benevolent smile while he is conversing. His finely poised head is crowned with either a lemon colored or a red turban, and his cassock (not the technical name for this garment), belted in at the waist and falling below the knees, alternates in a bright orange and rich crimson. He speaks excellent English and replied readily to any questions asked in sincerity.

Along with his simplicity of manner there is a touch of personal reserve when speaking to ladies, which suggests his chosen vocation. When questioned about the laws of his order, he has said, "I can do as I please, I am independent. Sometimes I live in the Himalaya Mountains, and sometimes in the streets of cities. I never know where I will get my next meal, I never keep money with me. I come here by subscription." Then looking round at one or two of his

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fellow-countrymen who chanced to be standing near he added, "They will take care of me," giving the inference that his board bill in Chicago is attended to by others. When asked if he was wearing his usual monk's costume, he said, "This is a good dress; when I am home I am in rags, and I go bare-footed. Do I believe in caste? Caste is a social custom; religion has nothing to do with it; all castes will associate with me."

It is quite apparent, however, from the deportment, the general appearance of Mr. Vivekananda that he was born among high castes—years of voluntary poverty and homeless wanderings have not robbed him of his birthright of gentleman; even his family name is unknown; he took that of Vivekananda in embracing a religious career, and "Swami" is merely the title of reverend accorded to him. He cannot be far along in the thirties, and looks as if made for this life and its fruition, as well as for meditation on the life beyond. One cannot help wondering what could have been the turning point with him.

"Why should I marry," was his abrupt response to a comment on all he had renounced in becoming a monk, "when I see in every woman only the divine Mother? Why do I make all these sacrifices? To emancipate myself from earthly ties and attachments so that there will be no re-birth for me. When I die I want to become at once absorbed in the divine, one with God. I would be a Buddha."

Vivekananda does not mean by this that he is a Buddhist. No name or sect can label him. He is an outcome of the higher Brahminism, a product of the Hindu spirit, which is vast, dreamy, self-extinguishing, a Sanyasi or holy man.

He has some pamphlets that he distributes, relating to his master, Paramhansa Ramakrishna, a Hindu devotee, who so impressed his hearers and pupils that many of them became ascetics after his death. Mozoomdar also looked upon this saint as his master, but Mozoomdar works for holiness in the world, in it but not of it, as Jesus taught.

Vivekananda's address before the parliament was broad as the heavens above us, embracing the best in all religions, as the ultimate universal religion—charity to all mankind, good works for the love of God, not for fear of punishment

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A DELEGATE TO THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

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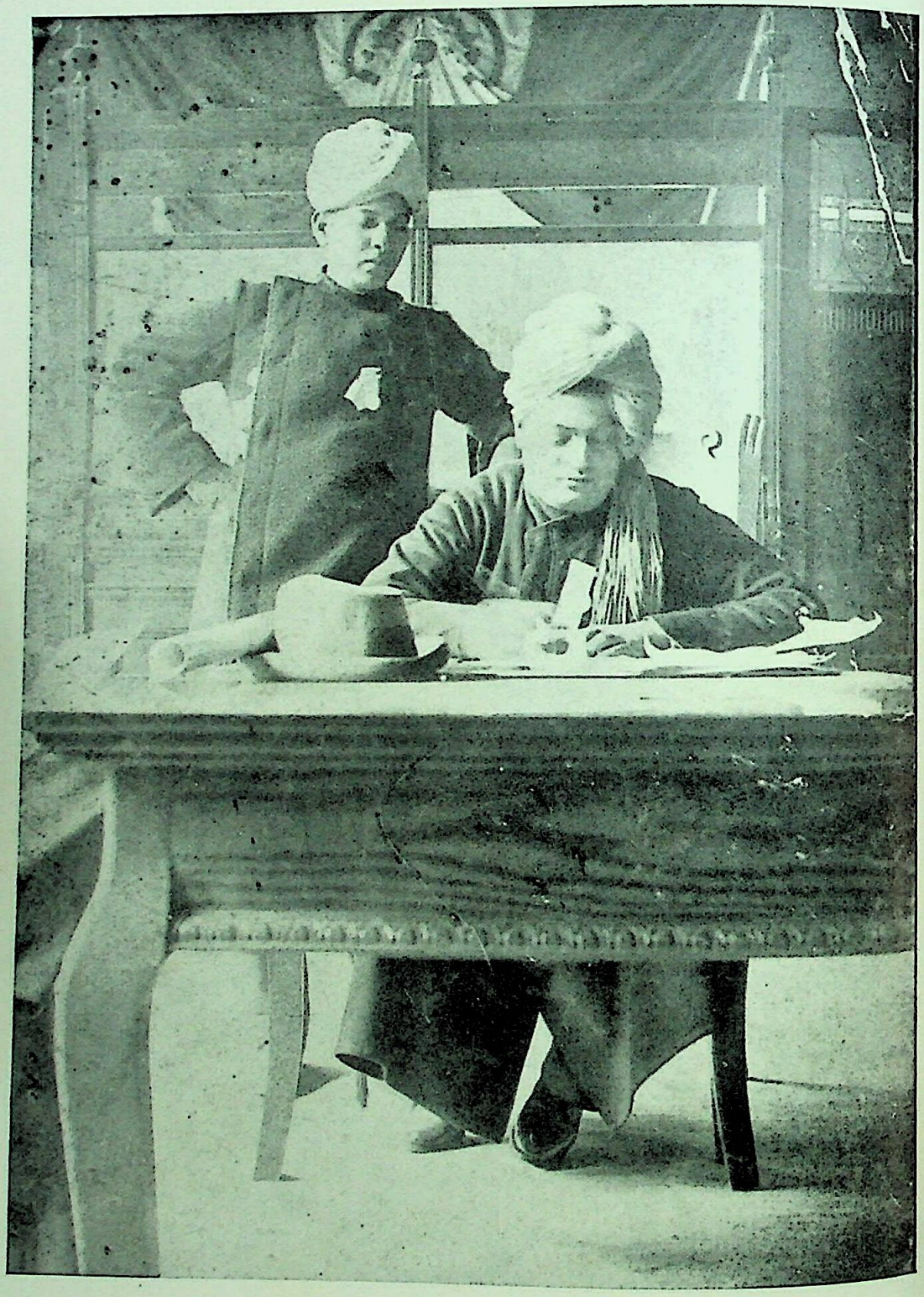

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND NARASIMHACHARYA

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or hope of reward. He is a great favorite at the parliament, from the grandeur of his sentiments and his appearance as well. If he merely crosses the platform he is applauded, and this marked approval of thousands he accepts in a childlike spirit of gratification, without a trace of conceit. It must be a strange experience too for this humble young Brahmin monk, this sudden transition from poverty and self-effacement to affluence and aggrandizement. When asked if he knew anything of those brothers in the Himalayas so firmly believed in by the Theosophists, he answered with the simple statement, "I have never met one of them," as much as to imply, "There may be such persons, but though I am at home in the Himalayas, I have yet to come across them."

Aside from being able to give new word pictures of Swamiji, we are fortunate enough to have recently discovered one of the first likenesses of him in America—an unposed snapshot, taken, it can be reasonably assumed, in this room marked, "No. 1—keep out." Perhaps it is not as clear as one would like all of his pictures to be, but it nonetheless belongs in Swamiji's history and is reproduced in this book.

Readers of the "Letters of Swami Vivekananda" will remember that in a letter, dated November 2, 1893, Swamiji asked his disciple, Alasinga, for information regarding a Hindu boy. This request as it is given in the fourth English edition of the "Letters" reads: "A boy called ——Acharya has cropped up in our midst. He has been loafing about the city for the last three years. Loafing or no loafing, I like him, but please write to me all about him, if you know anything. He knows you. He came in the year of the Paris Exhibition to Europe."

This "boy called ——Acharya" is without question the same Narasimhacharya who is pictured in the photograph mentioned above peering intently over Swamiji's shoulder. He was a "loafer," but a loafer of undoubted charm and a good deal of intelligence and spirit. In answer to Swamiji's request for information regarding him, Alasinga wrote a long biographical letter which told that Narasimhacharya was a prodigal son on whose account his mother had shed many tears. The letter followed Swamiji about from place to place in his later lecture tour and did not catch up with him until long after Narasimhacharya had been lost sight of. In the meantime Swamiji, on

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July 11, 1894, wrote again: "Why have you not written anything about Narasimha? He is practically starving here. I helped him a little, then he disappeared, I don't know where, and he has not written to me anything." But then it can come as no surprise to those who know of Swamiji that, during the rushed days of the Parliament and afterward, he tried to take care of a charming wastrel who, somehow, one cannot imagine how, had become a delegate to the dignified Parliament of Religions.

Another new description of Swamiji comes from the pen of a Rev. W. H. Thomas. The Reverend Mr. Thomas did not speak at the Parliament, but was no doubt a member of the audience. In a letter published in the *Wisconsin State Journal,* November 18, 1893, he writes of Swamiji:

> Of the many learned men in the East who took part in the great World's Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda was the most popular favorite, and when it was known that he was to speak thousands were turned away for want of room. Nor was it curiosity alone that drew the masses; for those who heard him once were so impressed by the magnetism of his fine presence, the charm and power of his eloquence, his perfect command of the English language and the deep interest in what he had to say, that they desired all the more to hear him again. It will be the opportunity of a life time for the cities of our land to see and hear this noble, earnest, loving Brahman, dressed in the costume of his order, telling the true story of the religion and customs of his far-off country.

It can be noted here in passing that Swamiji came to be generally known, among other things, as a "Brahmin monk." This was no doubt due to expediency on the part of the newspaper reporters, to whom, as to most Americans in that age, "a Brahmin" was synonymous with "a high caste Hindu who was a religious teacher." It was a careless but forgivable error and one which Swamiji could not have corrected. The term "Kshatriya," the caste to which he belonged, would not only have conveyed nothing to the public, but would have been a *bête noire* to the press. "Brahmin" was bad enough. As a matter of fact, Swamiji acquired a sizable assortment of epithets during his stay in America, being known variously as the "Indian Rajah,"

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"The High Priest of Brahma," "The Buddhist Priest," "Theosophist," and so on. Anything that conveyed the idea to the public that he was noble, religious and Indian sufficed for a headline. Later, however, Swamiji's enemies made capital out of these casual and typically American errors, imputing to him a deliberate misrepresentation of his status.

A picture of Swamiji at the Parliament would not be complete without our telling something of his activities outside the plenary sessions, which by no means occupied his entire time. These days were strenuous ones for the delegates. Papers were delivered not only at the Parliament proper, but at side meetings. It is known, for instance, that Swamiji spoke at least four times, and perhaps eight, at the Scientific Section. Such talks were not simply given and over with: open discussions followed, the speakers being questioned at length. In this connection it is interesting to remember a footnote on page 199 of Volume VIII of "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda." The material is from the *Chicago Daily Interocean* of September 23, 1893:

> In the Scientific Section yesterday morning Swami Vivekananda spoke on "Orthodox Hinduism." Hall III was crowded to overflowing and hundreds of questions were asked by auditors and answered by the great Sannyasi with wonderful skill and lucidity. At the close of the session he was thronged with eager questioners who begged him to give a semi-public lecture somewhere on the subject of his religion. He said that he already had the project under consideration.

On page 200 of the same volume is a report of a lecture delivered on Sunday, September 25, 1893, at the Third Unitarian Church, which may have been the semipublic lecture that Swamiji had been requested to give.

The long hours of listening, of discussing, of lecturing were almost continuous. Moreover, the hospitality which the leading citizens of Chicago offered the delegates allowed them little rest. Enormous receptions were held after the close of many of the evening sessions, and smaller parties were given throughout the two weeks.

Along with the other foreign delegates, Swamiji was officially introduced to American society on the evening of the opening day of

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the Parliament at a huge reception held by the Reverend Mr. Barrows at the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Bartlett—a great stone mansion, the rooms of which had been decorated with many hundreds of flags. On the second evening an even larger reception was given by President Bonney for all the delegates in the halls of the Art Institute. Thousands attended. On the following Thursday, the fourth evening, Mrs. Potter Palmer, President of the Lady Managers of the Fair and one of the most wealthy and influential social leaders of the Midwest, to whom Swamiji later referred as having been very kind to him in America, entertained the members of the Parliament at the Woman's Building in the Exposition grounds. Here electric launches were provided (an innovation in those days) to carry the foreign delegates—probably Swamiji among them—through the Fair's lagoons, that they might witness "the beautiful illuminations in the Court of Honor." Edison's newly perfected light bulbs, glowing magically and reflected in the dark waters, were no doubt a sight to behold.

At this reception of September 14 Swamiji gave a short talk on the condition of women in India. "It was Mrs. Palmer's earnest wish," writes Barrows, "to secure authoritative statements with regard to the condition of women in other lands, and appropriate addresses in response to her desires were made by the Archbishop of Zante, Hon. Pung Kwang Yu, Mr. Dharmapala, Mr. Mazoomdar, and Mr. Vivekananda." Whether this talk was that which is quoted on page 198 in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" is a puzzle which cannot be solved here, but it is not likely that a lecture given on September 14 would be reported in a paper of September 23, as was this published one. More likely, Swamiji spoke again on this subject on Friday, September 22.

More receptions for the delegates were held throughout the weeks by the leading citizens and ministers, and it is little wonder that Swamiji writes, "Many of the handsomest houses in this city are open to me," for there could have been few of the Chicago gentry whom he had not met and charmed. Years later Prince Wolkonsky, a free-lance delegate from Russia, commented to Albert Spaulding, the famous violinist, on Swamiji's popularity. In Spalding's autobiography, "Rise to Follow," this excerpt can be found:

> Wolkonsky was a delightful conversationalist. I found that he knew my country, having represented Russia in the Congress of Religions at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

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I asked him whether by any chance he had met Swami Vivekananda there. Oh, yes, he had, and for some time afterward the two had maintained an active correspondence. But how was it that I came to speak of him? I was, after all, much too young to have remembered. . . . I explained that my family had been acquainted with the Swami and had often talked about him.

"He made a—what do you call it?—sensational 'hit' in your country," said Wolkonsky, "especially with the Chicago ladies. Ah, those Chicago ladies! They seemed to take life —and incidentally themselves—very seriously."

The Chicago ladies were, as were the women throughout America, asserting themselves in a new-found independence. It is precisely because they took life and themselves so seriously that they took Swamiji seriously, perhaps instinctively finding in him a symbol of the freedom and dignity which they knew to be their birthright and which they were indisputably winning for themselves. Missionary criticism later attributed Swamiji's tremendous popularity among the American women to the brilliant color of his robe and turban!

Although the women, as a whole, may have given more expression than the men to their admiration of Swamiji—for the women were intent upon expressing themselves—men and women alike were drawn to him as to a magnet. The descriptions we have of Swamiji at the Parliament of Religions show him as colorful and dynamic, dominating the scene with the force of his personality and the utter purity of his message. He was in the full vigor of his youth, ready to face the entire world and to sacrifice his life for "the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed" of his motherland. And there was yet another reason for his phenomenal popularity. Never before had the people of America seen one in whom spiritual truths had been fully realized. Though the fact that Swamiji was such a one was not consciously known by the thousands who flocked to hear him speak, who waited interminable hours for even a few words and who applauded when he simply crossed the platform, the people through some inner knowledge unerringly recognized him for what he was and, from start to finish, instinctively sensed that his very presence conferred a blessing. "Darshan" was unheard of in America, but here at the Parliament was a spontaneous and unconscious manifestation of the attraction of the human soul to the spiritually great.

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This, then, is something of how Swamiji appeared to the Parliament. Let us now see how the Parliament appeared to him as it progressed through its seventeen days.

IV

For the most part each day was divided into three sessions lasting from two and a half to three hours each. At the opening of each morning session the presiding chairman—there was a different one each day—"invited the assembly, rising, to invoke, in silence, the blessing of God on the day's proceedings; then, while the assembly remained standing, [a chosen member of the Parliament] led in 'the Universal Prayer,' 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'" Talks by the delegates were limited to half an hour apiece, but this ruling was at times relaxed, for the crowd had its favorites and would brook no interference with them. The greatest favorite, of course, was Swamiji; and the story is well known of how the attraction of the crowd to him, embarrassing as it may have been to some of the defenders of Christianity, was used to good advantage. From the *Boston Evening Transcript,* as quoted in "The Life," we know, for instance, that "the four thousand fanning people in the Hall of Columbus would sit smiling and expectant, waiting for an hour or two of other men's speeches, to listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes." In a letter to India Swamiji himself remarked upon this trick of saving the best until the last, and recently we have come across other accounts of the maneuver. One of these is given by Virchand Gandhi, the Jain delegate, in the January 1895 issue of the *Arena,* an American periodical now defunct but once widely read, which described itself as "A Monthly Review of Social Advance":

> . . . at the Parliament of Religions . . . it was a fact that at least a third and sometimes two-thirds of the great audience of Columbus Hall would make a rush for the exits when a fine orator from India had closed his speech. It was even a very noticeable fact that, long before the close of the great Parliament, some of my countrymen, made popular by the Parliament, were used as a drawing card to hold the great audiences, and in this way thousands were compelled to sit and listen to long, dry, prosy papers by Christians. They

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showed plainly that they were not interested, but there they sat enduring with much murmuring, expecting the next speaker might be one of the popular Orientals whose name was usually first on the bulletin board. . . .

The allusion no doubt included Swamiji, and the following account from the *Northampton Daily Herald* of April 11, 1894, leaves no question regarding the matter:

> . . . At the Parliament of Religions Vivekananda was not allowed to speak until the close of the programme, the purpose being to make the people stay until the end of the session. On a warm day when some prosy professor talked too long, and people would leave the hall by hundreds, it only needed the announcement that Vivekananda would give a short address before the benediction was pronounced to hold the vast audience intact, and thousands would wait for hours to hear a fifteen minutes talk from this remarkable man.

Officially the Parliament was not intended to be a controversy but rather a symposium of all the faiths of the world. The subjects presented were divided into two categories. The first comprised speculative and abstract topics, such as the nature of God, the nature of man, the importance of religion, revelation, the Divine Incarnation, immortality, and so forth. These and like subjects were discussed from the second to the tenth day. Then, the metaphysical doctrines of the various faiths having been made clear, the remaining seven days of the Parliament were devoted to papers bearing upon the second category of subjects, namely, the relation of religion to practical social problems, such as family life, the arts and sciences, the love of mankind, morals, Christian missionary methods, and so on.

During the first ten days of the Parliament every religion had its say. A paper by Manilal N. Dvivedi gave a technical exposition of Hinduism and Indian philosophy. Dharmapala of the Maha-Bodhi Society in Calcutta defined Buddhism in all its aspects. Confucianism, Shintoism, Japanese Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, and many other religious doctrines were expounded and re-expounded. And of course, as we know, Swamiji in his "Paper on Hinduism" not only explained the teachings of his faith, but made them come alive as eternal truths pertinent to all men everywhere.

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No doubt some members of the audience had come expecting to hear strange and weird beliefs regarding idolatry, blood sacrifice and polytheism ; for the popular conception, fed by missionary propaganda, was that the Oriental lands were rife with dark and unholy practices. But there can be no doubt that by the time the first half of the Parliament was over many hitherto fast-imbedded misconceptions regarding Eastern religions had been pried loose in the popular mind. Not only Swamiji's "Paper on Hinduism," but other papers served to undermine the popular notions concerning, among other things, idolatry. The *Review of Reviews,* March 1894, in an article on Barrows' book, "The World's Parliament of Religions," reflects the change of attitude that was brought about on at least this one point:

> The book contains many pictures of idols such as one mostly finds in missionary literature. There they are intended to excite the horror and pity of the Christian reader. Here the attitude to idolatrous religions is avowedly sympathetic rather than critical ; but one can scarcely escape a twinge of the old feeling at a sight of the fantastic objects of worship. Nevertheless, the popular Protestant notion of idolatry was emphatically repudiated by those who spoke in the name of image-worshippers.

In substantiation of this the article quotes briefly from the papers of Dvivedi and of J. J. Modi, a Parsi of Bombay, and then goes on to quote at great length from Swamiji's "noble address," the "Paper on Hinduism." Accompanying the article is a photograph of Swamiji in profile.

The change in the popular attitude toward Eastern religions was also reflected in other contemporary journals and periodicals. The *Christian Herald* of October 11, 1893, wrote:

> From the Parliament of Religions which has just closed its sessions in Chicago two significant and important results have come. First we have learned from the addresses delivered by representatives of many religions, especially those of Asia, that the leaders of these faiths have generally the same aim as that of the Christian preacher. They are seeking in their way to eradicate sin and vice, to ennoble and purify the lives of men and to encourage kindness, charity and helpful-

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ness. Thus, so far as morality is concerned, they are allies rather than opponents of Christianity.

The thing that strikes us with something of a shock today is that this was news! The *Outlook* of October 7, 1893, made an even more profound discovery:

> The relations of the ethnic religions to Christianity are, in every phase of these meetings at Chicago, forced more and more into prominence, as the strong personalities of the men who represent Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, press themselves upon the listening thousands; their seriousness, earnestness, devoutness, and spirituality, as they sit side by side with Greek, Anglican, German, and American Churchmen, precludes the thought that their religions are ancient shades which will fall or melt into mist as the triumphant light of Christianity shines through them. The representatives of the Hindu cults, in particular, are no men of straw, and through their eyes Christians have looked, many perhaps for the first time, into the depths of religions which for thousands of years have not only occupied the minds of philosophers, but have formed the ethical codes and directed the Godward aspirations of millions and millions of human beings.

During the first ten days of the Parliament the full range of Christian conviction was also expounded. Although the principles of universal toleration for which, ideally, the Parliament stood were earnestly and well expressed by some of the Christian delegates, the notion that a universal religion meant nothing other than a universal acceptance of Christianity not only insinuated itself into the proceedings, but was sounded forth in unabashed oratory. An example or two may indicate something of the general trend.

On the third day of the Parliament, the Reverend Thomas Ebenezer Slater, of the London Missionary Society, Evangelist to educated Hindus, gave a talk entitled, "Concession to Native Ideas, having Special Reference to Hinduism." It may be worth noting here that the Reverend Mr. Slater had written a book called, "Studies of the Upanishads," in which he had stated: "The Vedanta, the highest conclusion of Indian thought, is based on a mistaken and

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pessimistic view of life; on a formulated dogma unsupported by any evidence and untaught in the hymns of the Rig-Veda: the whole an elaborate and subtle process of false reasoning." In his talk at the Parliament the Reverend T. E. Slater conceded to native ideas the fact that they were based on a search of the human spirit for the Divine. "The Vedas," he said, "present 'a shifting play of lights and shadows; sometimes the light seems to grow brighter, but the day never comes.' For, on examining them we note a remarkable fact. While they show that the spiritual needs and aspirations of humanity are the same . . . we fail to find a single text that purports to be a Divine answer to prayer, an explicit promise of Divine forgiveness, an expression of experienced peace and delight in God, as the result of assured pardon and reconciliation. There is no realization of ideas. The Bible alone is the Book of Divine Promise—the revelations of the 'exceeding riches of God's grace' . . . for this reason it is unique . . ." And so on.

On the fourth day, the Reverend Joseph Cook from Boston, a doughty man with fuzzy sideburns, gave a talk on "Strategic Certainties of Comparative Religion." The Reverend Mr. Cook was a popular and well-known lecturer who belonged to no particular denomination—"the servant," as he said, "of no clique or clan." He had delivered talks throughout the world, and his "Boston Monday Lectures" had been widely published. The Reverend J. Cook's paper at the Parliament consisted of one theme repeated over and over obsessively. It was in brief this: "It is clear that we cannot escape from conscience and God and our record of sin. It is a certainty and a strategic certainty that, except Christianity, there is no religion under heaven or among men that effectively provides for the peace of the soul by its harmonization with itself, its God, and its record of sin." The Reverend Mr. Cook concluded his talk with a poem that he wanted to have engraved on his tombstone. Space does not permit quoting the entire poem here, but perhaps two stanzas will suffice:

Endless sin means endless woe.
Into endless sin I go,
If my soul, from reason rent,
Takes from sin its final bent.

Balance lost, but not regained,
Final bent is soon attained.

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Fate is choice in fullest flower.
Man is flexile—for an hour!

The Rev. J. Cook's obsession with sin and lurking damnation was representative of what in that day was given out as religion by a large part of the Christian clergy. It is important to understand this, for one cannot otherwise appreciate, on the one hand, the shock with which some sections of the audience must have heard Swamiji's ringing words—"Ye divinities on earth—sinners? It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature"—nor, on the other hand, the enthusiastic approval of other sections. A stanza of a poem which appeared in the *Open Court* of October 12, 1893—a contemporary organ of popular opinion—reflects the latter reaction. The poem was entitled, "Aunt Hannah on the Parliament of Religions," which accounts for its dialect:

Then I heered th' han'some Hindu monk, drest up in orange dress,
Who sed that all humanity was part of God—no less,
An' he said we was *not* sinners, so I comfort took, once more,
While th' Parl'ment of Religions roared with approving roar.

It was this approving roar with which Swamiji's teachings were met that seriously alarmed many a Christian missionary. Later an attempt was made to set matters straight. "The Swami by his denial of sin," the missionaries explained, "shows that he knows nothing of true religion, and that he is a teacher of deadly error. Woe! woe! woe! to those who follow a blind guide to their own destruction." This quotation is taken from a little book entitled, "Swami Vivekananda and His Guru," published in 1897 by The Christian Literature Society for India.

Although many of the doctrines of Eastern religions that had been expounded during the first week of the Parliament by such men as Dvivedi and Dharmapala were hair-raising in the light of the orthodox, evangelical Christianity of 1893, they had been delivered in a dry and pedantic form not apt to set fire to the soul, and were therefore not alarming to the Christian ministry. But the enthusiastic reception which Swamiji was given from the very beginning was a matter of serious concern, and it was perhaps this that prompted several of the Christian delegates to attack Hinduism openly on

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September 19—the very day that Swamiji was scheduled to read his paper.

On this day, Houghton tells us, "The Hall of Columbus . . . could not accommodate all who endeavored to gain admittance." And from the *Chicago Interocean,* as quoted in "Swami Vivekananda and His Guru," we learn that

> Great crowds of people, the most of whom were women, pressed around the doors leading to the hall of Columbus, an hour before the time stated for opening the afternoon session, for it had been announced that Swami Vivekananda, the popular Hindu Monk, who looks so much like McCullough's Othello, was to speak. Ladies, ladies everywhere filled the great auditorium.

There was, no doubt, electricity in the air, and before long it began to crackle, eventually calling forth one of Swamiji's short but flaming rebukes—one which has not hitherto been known.

The Dubuque, Iowa, *Times* of September 29, 1893, gleefully reviews this ninth day of the Parliament as though a tournament were under consideration. The report, being somewhat impressionistic, does not make it entirely clear at exactly what point in the proceedings Swamiji had heard enough, but it was undoubtedly before he had deliverered his "Paper on Hinduism." The passages of the news article that have bearing on the debate are quoted here:

GOD MAN AND MATTER

Brethren All, Yet They Indulged
in Sharp Words.

Rev. Joe Cook Criticised the Hindoos, and the Hindoos
Attacked Christianity. . . .

WORLD'S FAIR, Sept. 28.—(Special.)—The Parliament of religions reached a point where sharp acerbities develop. The thin veil of courtesy was maintained, of course, but behind it was ill feeling. Rev. Joseph Cook criticised the Hindoos sharply and was more sharply criticised in turn,

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He said that to speak of a universe that was not created is almost unpardonable nonsense, and the Asiatics retorted that a universe which had a beginning is a self evident absurdity. Bishop J. P. Newman, firing at long range from the banks of the Ohio, declared that the orientals have insulted all the Christians of the United States by their misrepresentations of the missionaries, and the orientals, with their provokingly calm and supercilious smile, replied that this was simply the bishop's ignorance.

Buddhist Philosophy

In response to the question direct, three learned Buddhists gave us in remarkably plain and beautiful language their bedrock belief about God, man and matter.

Following this is a summary of Dharmapala's paper on "The World's Debt to Buddha," which he prefaced, as we learn from another source, by singing a Singhalese song of benediction. The article then continues:

His [Dharmapala's] peroration was as pretty a thing as a Chicago audience ever heard. Demosthenes never exceeded it.

Cantankerous Remarks.

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, was not so fortunate. He was out of humor, or soon became so, apparently. He wore an orange robe and a pale yellow turban and dashed at once into a savage attack on Christian nations in these words: "We who have come from the east have sat here day after day and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. We look about us and we see England the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot on the neck of 250,000,000 Asiatics. We look back into history and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe began with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow men. At such a price the Hindoo will not have prosperity."

And so they went on, each succeeding speaker getting more cantankerous, as it were.

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At the end of the afternoon session, Swamiji delivered his now famous "Paper on Hinduism." If some of the ideas which it contained had been presented before, they had never before been presented with such sublime eloquence, nor with the full force behind them of a divine mission. There was actually no ground left for the evangelizing Christians to stand on, for not only Swamiji's paper but Swamiji himself gave proof that Hinduism was a religion that soared to the highest reaches of the Divine—and attained them.

V

Nonetheless, up until the very last day of the Parliament, the Christians, that is to say, the missionary-minded Christians, continued to claim, with even greater insistence it would seem, that theirs was the superior religion, in fact, the *only* religion. The Hall of Columbus rang with such sentences as: "Christianity is absolutely superior in its motive power, its purifying influence and its uplifting inspiration from any and all other religions with which it comes in competition. The greasy bull of Madura and Tanjore has little in common with the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," or "The attitude . . . of Christianity towards religions other than itself is an attitude of universal, absolute, eternal, unappeasable hostility; while toward all men everywhere, the adherents of false religions by no means excepted, its attitude is an attitude of grace, mercy, peace, for whosoever will." That is, for whosoever will become a Christian!

It is tempting to go on quoting similar statements made during a parliament the avowed purpose of which was to bring together the representatives of the great religions of the world for mutual enlightenment and understanding. But perhaps by now the general trend has been made clear.

It must be said, however, lest the reader get too one-sided a view of the scene which confronted Swamiji, that there were several spots of light amid the gloom. There were many men attending the Parliament who were truly liberal and who were possessed of that blessed trait that seems to go with true liberality, namely, humor. Many of these were laymen. Prince Serge Wolkonsky, for instance, who informally represented Russia, and Colonel T. W. Higginson of Cambridge both spoke for a religion as broad and all-inclusive as the skies, and both later became friends of Swamiji. Lyman Abott,

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Alfred W. Momerie and Merwin-Marie Snell were others who represented the liberal trend and who welcomed Swamiji. But the talk most remarkable for its broad views came from the Reverend E. L. Rexford of Boston, who in the course of a long paper on "The Religious Intent" said: "No ruthless hand shall justly destroy any form of deity while yet it arrests the reverent mind and heart of man. There is only one being in the world who may legitimately destroy an idol, and that being is the one who has worshipped it. He alone can tell when it has ceased to be of service. And assuredly the Great Spirit who works through all forms and who makes all things his ministers, can make the rudest image a medium through which he will approach his child. . . . And the great religious teachers and founders of the world . . . have lived and taught and suffered and died and risen again, that they might bring us to themselves? No; but that they might bring us to God. 'God-Consciousness,' to borrow a noble word from Calcutta, has been the goal of them all."

Such papers were indicative of a decided swing toward a broad and liberal outlook, but they were rare. To the Christian clergy as a whole it never occurred that evangelism was presumption or that the occupation of soul-saving in foreign lands might be similar to carrying coals to Newcastle.

Although the Parliament was not intended to be a controversy, it was inevitable that a current of debate should weave through the entire proceedings, sometimes coursing beneath the surface, sometimes coming into open view. The question under consideration was not only whether or not Christianity was superior to other religions, but whether or not it was to replace other religions through missionary endeavor, and if so, how. It was a debate closely watched by a large part of the Christian world. Officially, only one session—the afternoon of the twelfth day—was devoted to a discussion of this all-important issue, but actually from first to last it colored the proceedings; it was there by implication, if not by overt expression, in most of the Christian talks; it cropped up in the papers of the foreign delegates; and it appeared irrepressibly in unscheduled discussions.

The Christian missions were, on the one hand, scathingly criticized by the representatives from China, Japan and India, and, on the other hand, passionately defended by the missionaries themselves. The foreign delegates contended that the failure of Christian missions was due to the fact that the missionaries were intolerant, selfish,

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ignorant and bigoted, and also to the fact that the countries they represented were anything but Christlike in their imperialistic policies. Moreover, while maintaining respect toward Christianity, the non-Christian religions showed beyond any reasonable doubt that Christian conversion was not necessary to salvation. The Christian speakers replied to the effect that (1) Christian missions were *not* a failure; (2) although individual missionaries might make mistakes, missionaries were, on the whole, worthy followers of Christ; (3) Christianity was the *only* religion that gave assurance of salvation.

Although Swamiji found it necessary to deliver a few decisive blows as the extent and virulence of Christian bigotry became more and more apparent, it was on the whole the other foreign delegates who in prepared talks roundly trounced the missionaries. In the course of expounding the doctrines of their respective religions during the first days of the Parliament, the Confucian, Pung Kwang Yu, and the Japanese Buddhist, Horin Toki, found little that was good in the intrusion of Christian missionaries into China and Japan. The missionaries, they said, were uneducated, arrogant and totally unnecessary. Such denunciations were delivered with impeccable and devastating politeness. A third talk, given by Kinza Riuge M. Hirai, a Buddhist layman of Japan, attributed the failure of Christian missions in his country not to the missionaries themselves, nor to the fact that Japan was already possessed of a satisfactory religion, but to the immoralities of Christian nations in their treatment of the Japanese people. This was an essentially political speech, and it brought down the house. The *Chicago Herald* of September 14, 1893, as quoted by Barrows, reported:

> Loud applause followed many of his [Hirai's] declarations, and a thousand cries of "shame" were heard when he pointed to the wrongs which his countrymen had suffered through the practices of false Christianity. When he had finished, Dr. Barrows grasped his hand, and the Rev. Jenkin Lloyd-Jones threw his arm around his neck, while the audience cheered vociferously and waved hats and handkerchiefs in the excess of enthusiasm.

Shortly the Hindus entered the field. Nagarkar, the Brahmo Samajist, cried on the seventh day for less soul-saving and more education. "Little, how little, do you ever dream that your money

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is expended in spreading abroad nothing but Christian dogmatism and Christian bigotry, Christian pride and Christian exclusiveness. I entreat you to spend at least one-tenth of all this vast fortune on sending out to our country, unsectarian, broad-learned missionaries that will spend all their efforts and energies in educating our women, our men, and our masses." The force of this plea, however, was lost in a talk devoted, on the one hand, to a rhapsodic tribute to the moral and civilizing influence of English rule in India—an account which must have caused Swamiji no little anguish—and, on the other hand, to the reform movement of the Brahmo Samaj.

The evening session of the tenth day "was concluded," Barrows says, "by a brief speech from Swami Vivekananda." This was the now well-known address, "Religion Not the Crying Need of India." The version of this talk, as quoted in Volume I of "The Complete Works," is provocative enough, but there is evidence that it is not quoted in full. The *Christian Herald* of October 11, 1893, includes in its article on the Parliament some quotations from the address that are new to us. "Christian missionaries," Swamiji is here reported as having said, "come and offer life, but only on condition that the Hindus become Christians, abandoning the faith of their fathers and forefathers. Is it right? . . . If you wish to illustrate the meaning of 'brotherhood,' treat the Hindu more kindly, even though he be a Hindu and is faithful to his religion. Send missionaries to them to teach them how better to earn a piece of bread, and not teach them metaphysical nonsense."

The Catholics received Swamiji's criticism with hearty enthusiasm. In the chapter of Barrows' history entitled "Introduction to the Parliament Papers" it is reported that ". . . on the eleventh day, Bishop Keane said: 'I endorse the denunciation that was hurled forth last night against the system of pretended charity that offered food to the hungry Hindus at the cost of their conscience and faith. It is a shame and a disgrace to those who call themselves Christians.' . . . Bishop Keane, who read Mr. Donnelly's review of the history of Catholic charity, said that in India their system was one of absolute indifference to the religious faith of the needy, and in addition to endorsing the denunciation by Mr. Vivekananda of Christian charity any way limited to converts, he pronounced justifiable, from the Hindu point of view, 'the denunciation of the Christian system of the atonement, that came also from the heart of the Hindu monk.' He declared that we do not hear half enough of such criticism, and that

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if by these criticisms Vivekananda can only stir us and sting us into better teachings and better doings in the great work of Christ in the world, he for one would only be grateful to our friend the Hindu monk."

Turning to the actual report of Bishop John J. Keane's reading of Mr. Donnelly's paper, we find a further parenthetical observation: ". . . My heart was glad when I listened last night and heard our good friend, the Hindu, confess that for years he did not know where he was going to get his next meal. That was the way with these poor Franciscan monks. They were reduced to poverty in order that they might better consecrate themselves to the service of God everywhere."

Here again is evidence that Swamiji said more in his talk than has been recorded in any of the histories of the Parliament. It is also possible that Swamiji spoke at other sessions on the subject of missionaries, for the *Outlook*, October 7, 1893, in giving an impressionistic picture of the Parliament, adds this highlight:

> . . . The subject of Christian work in India calls Vivekananda, in his brilliant priestly orange, to his feet. He criticises the work of Christian missions. It is evident that he has not tried to understand Christianity, but neither, as he claims, have its priests made any effort to understand *his* religion, with its ingrained faiths and race-prejudices of thousands of years' standing. They have simply come, in his view, to throw scorn on his most sacred beliefs, and to undermine the morals and spirituality of the people he has been set to teach.

This may or may not be a reference to Swamiji's talk, "Religion Not the Crying Need of India," on the tenth evening, but in any case, it is certain that the full text of Swamiji's extemporaneous utterances at the Parliament have not been recorded.

The afternoon of the twelfth day of the Parliament was officially devoted to the "Criticism and Discussion of Missionary Methods." "On this day," Barrows tells us, "the crowds in the Hall of Columbus were, if possible, more dense than on any previous day." It is conceivable that these crowds expected to witness a row. If so, they were destined to disappointment, for there was no row. Dharmapala and Narasimhacharya represented the Eastern religions ; the Reverends G. T. Candlin and R. E. Hume, the Christian. (Swamiji was not

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present, being that afternoon at the Scientific Section.) Each gave a short but cogent talk. Dharmapala, who opened the discussion, did not spare the missionaries; whereupon, in reply, the Reverend George T. Candlin, an American missionary to China, who for some reason always dressed during the Parliament in Chinese costume, objected with indignation to Dharmapala's "personal remarks." Narasimhacharya, who followed, did not attribute the failure of Christianity to the selfishness and intolerance of the missionaries, but rather to their interference with native custom. It was, of course, not to be admitted by the Christians that Christian missionary work had by any means failed in foreign lands. The Reverend Mr. Hume informed Narasimhacharya that "in a generation all the positions of influence and of responsibility will be in the hands of the Christian community in India," and went on to add that missionaries sometimes do make mistakes and are grateful for correction. This same minister, as will be seen in a following chapter, attempted some months later without success to engage Swamiji in public controversy.

The session was short, and it was over without mishap. But the tension that had accumulated throughout the Parliament finally broke down the control of the Reverend George T. Pentecost, who on the following Sunday, when Swamiji was quite probably present, interspersed throughout his paper many glaring violations of the Parliament's watchword: "Tolerance and Fraternity." For a report of this incident I quote from Barrows:

"The argument of [Pentecost's paper, "The Invincible Gospel,"] was the ultimate triumph of Christianity as assured by its essential superiority to all other religions. Certain impromptu remarks interjected between the lines of the paper drew forth a reply on the following day. He was reported by the press as saying: 'Some of the Brahmans of India have been here and have dared to make an attack upon Christianity. They take the slums of New York and Chicago and ask us why we do not cure ourselves. They take what is outside the pale of Christianity and judge Christianity by it.' Proceeding then to attack the religious systems of India on the point of morality, he alleged that among the followers of Brahmanism there were thousands of temples in which there were hundreds of priestesses who were known as immoral and profligate. They were prostitutes because they were priestesses, and priestesses because they were prostitutes."

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It is true that the Reverend Mr. Pentecost represented the extreme of bigotry and not the spirit of the Parliament; but he represented also that large number of his kind, both in America and in India, who were later to do their utmost to destroy Swamiji.

VI

On the evening of September 27, after seventeen days of long, sometimes tiresome, sometimes stirring sessions, the Parliament of Religions came to a close. Every shade of religious thought had been expressed, from the most light-filled to the most clouded, and it could not have been lost upon the audience—indeed, it *was* not—that the heights of spiritual expression came from the least expected quarters.

Yet despite the fact that because of this complete reversal there were moments of tension that came close to justifying the fears of those who had predicted a scene of discord rather than one of harmony, the total impression one receives through reading the accounts of the Parliament is one of festivity. It was as though, no matter what some of Her children might have thought, the Divine Mother had arranged this party and was present through it all. It is difficult to put one's finger on the source of this impression. It is not to be found in the high-flown protestations of harmony, nor is it in the handkerchief-waving. Perhaps it is simply in the fact that, regardless of what was said about God, most of the delegates spoke of Him in earnestness, and in the further fact that each was allowed to say what he would. Certainly at the close of the Parliament the elation was marked.

"More than seven thousand persons were crowded into the Halls of Washington and Columbus," Barrows writes. "For more than an hour before the time announced, the eager crowds swept up against the doors of the Art Palace. The throng extended from the doorways to Michigan avenue and thence for half a block in either direction. . . . An eye-witness reports: '. . . The last and closing scene of the great Parliament of Religions is one that will live forever in the memory of those who were so fortunate as to be spectators. The great Hall of Columbus was illuminated by a myriad of lights. Every inch of room was used by the greatest crowd that ever sat within its walls. On the stage, beneath the folds of the flags of all nations, were the representatives of all religions. The dull, black and somber

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE PLATFORM AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

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raiment of the West only intensified the radiantly contrasted garbs of the Oriental priests.' Twice during the evening flashlight photographs were taken of the historic group on the platform." (Lest the reader forget, the illumination was gas light, and the flashlight a burst of gunpowder.)

In passing it should perhaps be noted that Swamiji unfortunately does not appear on the platform in any of the published pictures of the Parliament, of which there are three, taken, respectively, on the morning of September 14, the morning of September 21, and the evening of September 27. In the last of these, which has been published in the second edition of "The Life," Swamiji has been tentatively identified in the front row of the delegates; I am sorry to say that a comparison with an enlarged and annotated copy of the same picture shows that this is not Swamiji but that "loafer," Narasimhacharya. There must, however, be several unpublished pictures in existence of the Parliament platform in which Swamiji appears. We have been fortunate enough to have seen one of these and are including it in the present volume.

The immediate results of the Parliament were mixed. Perhaps it is correct to say that the bigots became more bigoted, for their backs had been pressed to the wall, and that the liberal-minded became more liberal, for they were now confirmed in their views, and that this latter outcome was undoubtedly the more important and enduring. It is undeniable, moreover, that the American people had not been merely intellectually impressed by the nobility and supreme wisdom of Eastern doctrines which hitherto, in the words of Dr. Alfred Momerie, "they had been taught to regard with contempt," but that they had been touched by and had responded to the tremendous power of living spirituality that Swamiji embodied. Something far more important and more far-reaching had taken place than an intellectual appreciation of Eastern religions. It was as though the soul of America had long asked for spiritual sustenance and had now been answered.

This is not to say, as has sometimes been implied, that Swamiji was recognized by all for what he was—the spiritual leader of the age. Some attributed greater spirituality, for instance, to Mazoomdar, whose talk on the Brahmo Samaj unaccountably inspired the multitude to rise to its feet and sing the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." The *Advocate* of September 9, 1893, after stating that Swamiji's

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"knowledge of English is as though it were his mother tongue," went on to say:

> . . . This is equally true of Mazoomdar, who however is a man of far greater spirituality and profounder religious conviction. The chief representative of the Brahmo Samaj, he is careful to say that he did not get his religion from the missionaries, but that it is an evolution out of Hinduism, now laying hold of all that is true in that as in all other forms of religion, but culminating in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

It is not too surprising that the *Advocate* gave first place to Mazoomdar. In the same article the observation was made that since "most of the representatives of the religions of India and Japan were accomplished English scholars, . . . it was inevitable . . . that their expositions of Brahminism, of Shintoism, should take colouring from the truths they had learned directly or indirectly of Christ."

It is amusing in this connection to take note of Barrows' remarks in regard to Swamiji's final address. As will be remembered, Swamiji said in the course of his talk: "The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the others and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its own law of growth." This was, of course, not at all the looked-for lesson of the Parliament. Certainly the Christian was not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist. With Swamiji most would have cried, "God forbid!" But the halls had resounded with the conviction that the Hindus and Buddhists were to become Christians. Barrows tells us: "Swami Vivekananda was always heard with interest by the Parliament, but very little approval was shown to some of the sentiments expressed in his closing address."

The public reaction was different. A description of the closing scene is quoted here from the *Critic* of October 7, 1893, with the omission of the text of Swamiji's address:

> . . . The scene was one not to be easily forgotten. Before an audience which filled every corner of the great hall, the delegates from distant lands paid tribute to the purity of Christian ideals. They bore witness to the spirit of charity which animated the speakers of the congress, and

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a kind of exhilaration possessed them, as of something large and fine accomplished. With the black-coated Occidentals were seated thus the dark-skinned men from the East, quiet, attentive and dignified.

A young African prince, whose black face showed what is best in the Ethiopian type, arose in his dark-richly-embroidered robes, to express a conviction that the Parliament had promoted a feeling for the brotherhood of man which can unite all races. "The very atmosphere," he said, "seems pregnant with an indefinable, inexpressible thing—something too solemn for human utterance." And it was this background to the joyousness that appealed to the imagination and gave the occasion its peculiar impressiveness. . . .

But the most impressive figures of the Parliament were the Buddhist priest, H. Dharmapala of Ceylon, and the Hindoo monk, Suami Vivekananda. "If theology and dogma stand in your way in search of truth," said the former incisively, "put them aside. Learn to think without prejudice, to love all beings for love's sake, to express your convictions fearlessly, to lead a life of purity, and the sunlight of truth will illuminate you." But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches at this meeting, whose triumphant enthusiasm rightly culminated in the superb rendering by the Apollo Club of the Hallelujah chorus, no one expressed so well the spirit of the Parliament, its limitations and its finest influence, as did the Hindoo monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience, for he is an orator by divine right, and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich, rhythmical utterance he gave them. . . . [After quoting the greater part of Swamiji's Final Address, the article continues:]

Perhaps the most tangible result of the congress was the feeling it aroused in regard to foreign missions. The impertinence of sending half-educated theological students to instruct the wise and erudite Orientals was never brought home to an English-speaking audience more forcibly. It is only in the spirit of tolerance and sympathy that we are at liberty to touch their faith, and the exhorters who

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possess these qualities are rare. It is necessary to realize that we have quite as much to learn from the Buddhists as they from us, and that only through harmony can the highest influence be exerted.

Chicago, 3 Oct., 1893. LUCY MONROE.

Other organs of public opinion attest to Swamiji's popularity and influence. Many quotations from these are already known to the readers of "The Life," but one more can here be added from the *Chicago Interocean* of September 1, 1894, which almost a year following the Parliament recalled Swamiji's unquestionable popularity:

. . .

VIVEKANANDA AND THE HINDOOS

There was no delegate to the Parliament of Religions who attracted more courteous attention in Chicago by his winning ways, his ability, and his fearless discussion of all questions relating to his religion than Swami Vivekananda, who represented the Hindoos of South India. This distinguished Hindoo was enthusiastic in his admiration of the greatness of the Western World and its material development, eager in his efforts to learn of those things that might be beneficial to his people, earnest in his desire to recognize the religions of all people as related to each other, and all sincere efforts in behalf of virtue and holiness, but at the same time he defended the Hindoo religion and philosophy with an eloquence and power that not only won admiration for himself but consideration for his own teachings.

To a request of the *New York World* of October 1, 1893, for "a sentiment or expression regarding the significance of the great meeting" from each representative, Swamiji replied with a quotation from the Gita and one from Vyasa:

"I am He that am in every religion—like the thread that passes through a string of pearls." "Holy, perfect and pure men are seen in all creeds, therefore they all lead to the same truth—for how can nectar be the outcome of poison?"

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And this certainly was the lesson learned through the Parliament. Though some may have been loath to acknowledge it at the time, it was a lesson that struck deep and that was not forgotten. The back of bigotry, although not broken, had received its first hard blow.

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CHAPTER THREE

IN AND AROUND CHICAGO

I

Among the many gaps in the biographies of Swami Vivekananda is one which appears after the Parliament of Religions and extends over the period comprising the last part of 1893 and almost the whole of 1894. This gap, to be sure, is not total. We know, for instance, that Swamiji toured through the Middle West and East, lecturing in many cities, for a time in connection with a lecture bureau and later independently, and also we catch distant and disconnected glimpses of him as he went from place to place. But when we consider the hundreds of conversations he must have held during this period, the scores of lectures and the many private interviews he must have given, to say nothing of the innumerable spiritual experiences he must have had, we cannot help feeling dissatisfied with the meagerness of our present knowledge. In this current chapter, therefore, and in those to follow I have tried to throw a little more light upon Swamiji's post-Parliament activities.

One thing that has been obscure is the length of time Swamiji remained in Chicago before commencing his lecture tour. Supported by one or two contemporary reports, we can now hazard the guess that he made his home there for at least two months, during which time he took short trips to nearby towns. In connection with this period we are fortunate enough to have two heretofore unpublished letters that Swamiji wrote to Dr. Wright. These are, I believe, among the most valuable of his letters, for they not only supply facts regarding his activities but convey something of his ecstatic state of mind during the early days of his American mission. The first letter, which follows, was written on October 2:

Chicago
the 2nd October '93

Dear Adhyapakji—

I do not know what you are thinking of my long silence. In the first place I dropped in on the Congress in the

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eleventh hour. And quite unprepared and that kept me very very busy for some time. Secondly I was speaking almost every day in the Congress and had no time to write and last and greatest of all—my kind friend I owe so much to you that it would have been an insult to your *Ahetuka* (unselfish) friendship to have written you business like letters in a hurry. The Congress is now over.

Dear brother I was so so afraid to stand before that great assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and speak but the Lord gave me strength and I almost every day heroically (?) faced the platform and the audience. If I have done well He gave me the strength for it if I have miserably failed—I knew that before hand—for I am hopelessly ignorant.

Your friend prof. Bradley was very kind to me and he always cheered me on And oh! everybody is so kind here to me who am nothing—that it is beyond my power of expression. Glory unto *Him* in the highest in whose sight the poor ignorant monk from India is the same as the learned divines of this mighty land. And how the Lord is helping me every day of my life brother—I sometimes wish for a life of million million ages to serve Him through the work dressed in rags and fed by charity.

Oh how I wished that you were here to see some of our sweet ones from India—the tender hearted Buddhist Dhammapala the orator Mazoomdar and realize that in that far off and poor India there are hearts that beat in sympathy to yours, born and brought up in this mighty—and great country.

My eternal respects to your holy wife and to your sweet children my eternal love and blessings.

Col Higginson a very broad man told me that your daughter had writtten to his daughter about me and he was very sympathetic to me. I am going to Evanston tomorrow and hope to see prof. Bradley there.

May He make us all more and more pure and holy so that we may live a perfect spiritual life even before throwing off this earthly body.

Vivekananda

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[The letter continues on a separate sheet of paper:]

I am now going to be reconciled to my life here. All my life I have been taking every circumstance as coming from him and calmly adapt myself to it. At first in America I was almost out of my water I was afraid I would have to give up the accustomed way of being guided by the Lord and *cater* for myself—and what a horrid piece of mischief and ingratitude was that. I now clearly see that He who was guiding me on the snow tops of the Himalayas and the burning plaines [sic] of India is here to help me and guide me. *Glory unto Him* in the highest. So I have calmly fallen in my old ways. Some body or other gives me a shelter and food some body or other comes to ask me to speak about Him and I know He sends them and mine is to obey. And then He is supplying my necessities and His *will be done*

"He who rests [in] Me and gives up all other self assertion and struggles I carry to him whatever he needs" Gita

So it is in Asia So in Europe So in America So in the deserts of India So in the rush of business in America for is He not here also? And if He does not I only would take for granted that He wants that I should lay aside this three minutes body of clay—and hope to lay it down gladly—

We may or may not meet brother. He knows. You are great learned and Holy. I dare not preach to you or your wife—but to your children—I quote these passages from the Vedas—

"The four Vedas, Sciences, languages, philosophy and all other learnings are only ornamental the real learning—the true Knowledge is that which enables us to reach him who is unchangeable in His love"

"How real, how tangible, how visible is He through whom the skin touches the eyes see and the world gets its reality"

"Hearing Him nothing remains to be heard
Seeing Him nothing remains to be seen
Attaining Him nothing remains to be attained"
"He is the eye of our eyes the ear of our ears the
Soul of our Souls."

He is nearer to you my dears than even your father and mother—you are innocent and pure as flowers—remain so

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and He will reveal Himself unto you. Dear Austin when you are playing there is another playmate playing with you who loves you more than anybody else and oh He is so full of fun. He is always playing—sometimes with great big balls which we call the sun and earth sometimes with little children like you and laughing and playing with you.

How funny it would be to see him and play with Him my dear think of it.

Dear Adhyapakji, I am moving about just now—only when I come to Chicago—I always go to see Mr. and Mrs. Lyons one of the noblest couples I have seen here If you would be kind enough to write to me kindly address it to the care of Mr. John B. Lyons 262 Michigan Ave Chicago.

"He who gets hold of the One in this world of many—The one constant existence in a world of flitting shadows—the One life in a world of Death—He alone crosses this sea of misery and struggle. None else none else" Vedas

"He who is the Brahman of the Vedantins Ishwara of the Naiyayikas, Purusha of the Sankhyas, *cause* of the Mimamsakas *Law* of the Buddhists *absolute zero* of the Atheists and love infinite unto those that love, may [He] take us all under His merciful protection"

Udayanacharya

(a great philosopher of the Nyaya or Dualistic school and this is the Benediction pronounced at the very beginning of his wonderful book "Kusumanjali a handful of flowers" in which He attempts to establish the existence of a personal creator and moral ruler of infinite love independently of revelation.)

Yours ever grateful friend
Vivekananda

Until recently, where Swamiji stayed during the sessions of the Parliament of Religions has been a mystery. Suddenly, however, floods of light have been thrown on the subject. Thanks to Cornelia Conger, a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lyons, whom Swamiji mentions in the above letter, we learn that it was they who were his hosts during this period. Cornelia Conger was only six years old in 1893, but her memories of Swamiji are vivid, and her excellent "Memoirs of Swami Vivekananda" which appeared in the *Prabuddha*

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Bharata of May 1956 give an invaluable picture of him at this important time in his life. It is to Swami Shankarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India, that we owe Miss Conger's article, for, having considered her memories "childish and trivial," she had been reluctant to give them written form. "But the Swami [Shankarananda] said something," Miss Conger writes, "infinitely kind and gracious which I shall never forget: That every great man is like a jewel with many facets. That each facet is important as it reflects a different aspect of his character." "So here," she continues, "is my very tiny 'facet' offered in memory of someone I have loved for all these 62 years." Her "Memoirs" read in part:

> Before the Congress (or Parliament) of Religions met in Chicago at the time of the Columbian Exposition in 1893, members of various churches volunteered to ask into their homes as guests delegates to it. My grandmother, Mrs. John B. Lyon, was one of these, requesting, if possible, that a delegate who was broad-minded be sent to us as my grandfather was much interested in philosophy but heartily disliked bigots! Our home was 262, Michigan Avenue, a pleasant somewhat old-fashioned farm house, painted olive green with boxes of red geraniums across the front. It was full of guests all that summer as my grandparents were naturally hospitable and this World's Fair was a very exciting and fascinating affair. So all our out-of-town relatives and friends were eager to come to Chicago to see it. When word came that our delegate was to arrive on a certain evening, the house was so crowded that my grandmother had to send her elder son to a friend's house to have his room for our guest. We had been given no idea who he would be nor even what religion he was representing. A message came that a member of our Church—the First Presbyterian—would bring him after midnight. Everyone went to bed except my grandmother who waited up to receive them. When she answered the doorbell, there stood Swami Vivekananda in a long yellow robe, a red sash, and a red turban—a very startling sight to her because she had probably never seen an East Indian before. She welcomed him warmly and showed him to his room. When she went to bed she was somewhat troubled. Some of our guests were Southerners as we had many friends in the South

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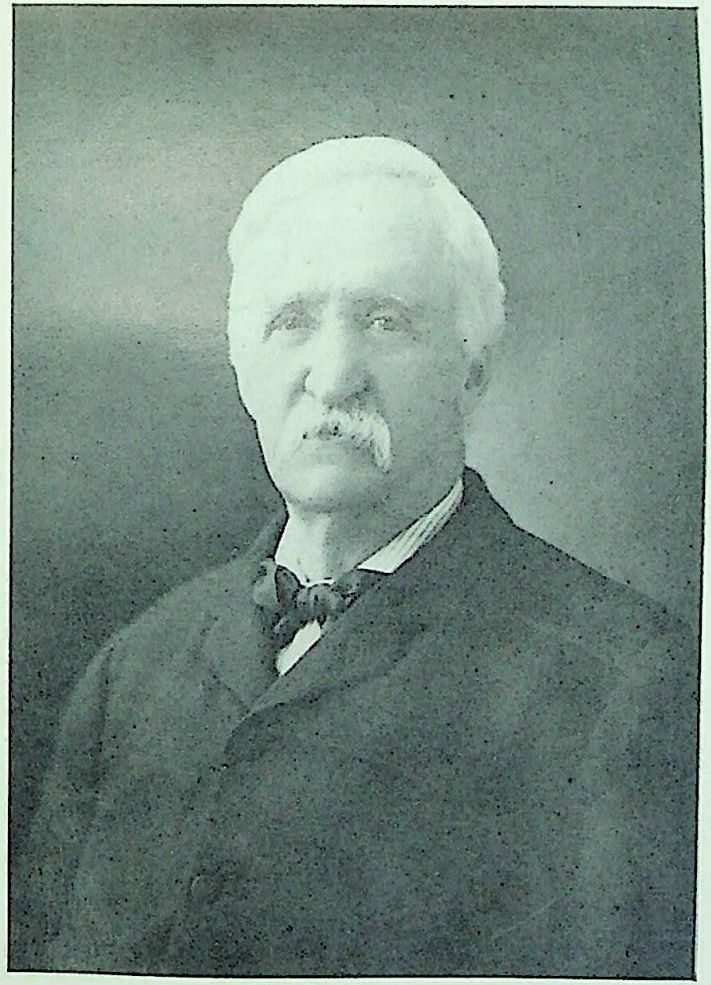
Mrs. John B. Lyon



Mr. John B. Lyon

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because we owned a sugar plantation on the Bayou Têche in Louisiana. Southerners have a strong dislike for associating with anyone but whites because they stupidly think of all people who are darker as on a mental and social plane of their former Negro slaves. My grandmother herself had no color prejudice and she was sufficiently intelligent anyway to know that Indians are of the same Caucasian inheritance as we are.

When my grandfather woke up, she told him of the problem and said he must decide whether it would be uncomfortable for Swami and for our Southern friends to be together. If so, she said he could put Swami up as our guest at the new Auditorium Hotel near us. My grandfather was dressed about half an hour before breakfast and went into the library to read his morning paper. There he found Swami and, before breakfast was served, he came to my grandmother and said, "I don't care a bit, Emily, if all our guests leave! This Indian is the most brilliant and interesting man who has ever been in our home and he shall stay as long as he wishes." That began a warm friendship between them which was later summed up—much to my grandfather's embarrassment!—by having Swami calmly remark to a group of my grandfather's friends one day at the Chicago Club: "I believe Mr. Lyon is the most Christ-like man I ever met!"

He seemed to feel especially close to my grandmother, who reminded him of his own mother. She was stout and very erect, with quiet dignity and assurance, excellent common sense, and a dry humor that he enjoyed. My mother, who was a pretty and charming young widow, and I—who was only six years old—lived with them. My grandmother and my mother attended most of the meetings of the Congress of Religions and heard Swamiji speak there and later at lectures he gave. I know he helped my sad young mother who missed her young husband so much. Mother read and studied Swamiji's books later and tried to follow his teachings.

My memories are simply of him as a guest in our home—of a great personality who is still vivid to me! His brilliant eyes, his charming voice with the lilt of a slight well-bred Irish tongue, his warm smile! He told me enchanting stories of India, of monkeys and peacocks, and flights of bright

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green parrots, of banyan trees and masses of flowers, and markets piled with all colors of fruits and vegetables. To me they sounded like fairy stories, but now that I have driven over many hundreds of miles of Indian roads, I realize that he was simply describing scenes from the memories of his own boyhood. I used to rush up to him when he came into the house and cry, "Tell me another story, Swami," and climb into his lap. Perhaps, so far from home and in so strange a country, he found comfort in the love and enthusiasm of a child. He was always wonderful to me! Yet—because a child is sensitive—I can remember times when I would run into his room and suddenly know he did not want to be disturbed—when he was in meditation. He asked me many questions about what I learned in school and made me show him my school-books and pointed out India to me on the map—it was pink, I recall—and told me about his country. He seemed sad that little Indian girls did not have, in general, the chance to have as good an education as we American children. . . . My grandmother was president of the Women's Hospital at home and he visited it with lively interest and asked for all the figures in infant mortality, etc.

I was fascinated by his turban which struck me as a very funny kind of a hat, especially as it had to be wound up afresh every time he put it on! I persuaded him to let me see him wrap it back and forth around his head.

As our American food is less highly seasoned than Indian, my grandmother was afraid he might find it flat. He told us, on arrival, that he had been told to conform to all the customs and the food of his hosts, so he ate as we did. My grandmother used to make a little ceremony of making salad dressing at the table and one of the condiments she used was Tabasco Sauce, put up by some friends of hers, the McIlhennys, in Louisiana. She handed him the bottle and said, "You might like a drop or two of this on your meat, Swami." He sprinkled it on with such a lavish hand that we all gasped and said, "But you can't do that! It's terribly hot!" He laughed and ate it with such enjoyment that a special bottle of the sauce was always put at his place after that.

My mother took him to hear his first Symphony Concert

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on a Friday afternoon. He listened with great attention but with his head a bit on one side and a slightly quizzical expression. "Did you enjoy it?" mother asked at the end. "Yes, it was very beautiful," he replied, but mother felt it was said with some reservation. "What are you thinking?" she asked. "I am puzzled by two things," he answered. "First, I do not understand why the program says that this same program will be repeated on Saturday evening. You see in India, one type of music is played at dawn. The music for noontime is very different, and that for the evening is also of a special character. So I should think that what sounds suitable to your ears in the early afternoon would not sound harmonious to you at night. The other thing that seems strange to me is the lack of overtones in the music and the greater intervals between the notes. To my ears it has holes in it like that good Swiss cheese you give me!"

When he began to give lectures, people offered him money for the work he hoped to do in India. He had no purse. So he used to tie it up in a handkerchief and bring it back—like a proud little boy!—pour it into my grandmother's lap to keep for him. She made him learn the different coins and to stack them up neatly and to count them. She made him write down the amount each time, and she deposited in her bank for him. He was overwhelmed by the generosity of his audience who seemed so happy to give to help people they had never seen so far away!

Once he said to my grandmother that he had had the greatest temptation of his life in America. She liked to tease him a bit and said, "Who is she, Swami?" He burst out laughing and said, "Oh, it is not a lady, it is Organization!" He explained how the followers of Ramakrishna had all gone out alone and when they reached a village, would just quietly sit under a tree and wait for those in trouble to come to consult them. But in the States he saw how much could be accomplished by organizing work. Yet he was doubtful about just what type of organization would be acceptable to the Indian character and he gave a great deal of thought and study how to adapt what seemed good to him in our Western World to the best advantage of his own people. . . . I spoke earlier of his delightful slight Irish tongue. . . . My grand-

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father used to joke him about it. But Swami said it was probably because his favorite professor was an Irish gentleman, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin.

After Swami left us, my mother was eager to do some studying along the lines of Oriental philosophy, as she realized she had not enough background to understand his teachings as fully as she wished. A Mrs. Peake held some classes in Chicago that following winter and, in the course of them, mother discovered much to her surprise that if she held a letter torn up into fine bits between her hands, she received a brief but vivid impression of the writer, both physically and mentally. When Swamiji returned to Chicago a year or so later to give lectures, mother asked him about this strange gift and he said he had it also, and that when he was young he used to have fun doing it to show off, but Ramakrishna had rapped his knuckles and said, "Don't use this great gift except for the good of mankind! Hands that receive these impressions can also bring relief from pain. Use this gift to bring healing!"

On this second visit, he only stayed with us for a short time. He knew he could teach better if he lived in his own regime of food and of many hours for meditation. It also left him free to receive many who came to him for help. So my grandmother helped him find a simple but comfortable little flat, but I do not recall that I ever saw it.

Swamiji was such a dynamic and attractive personality that many women were quite swept away by him and made every effort by flattery to gain his interest. He was still young and, in spite of his great spirituality and his brilliance of mind, seemed to be very unworldly. This used to trouble my grandmother who feared he might be put in a false or uncomfortable position and she tried to caution him a little. Her concern touched and amused him and he patted her hand and said, "Dear Mrs. Lyon, you dear American mother of mine, don't be afraid for me! It is true I often sleep under a banyan tree with a bowl of rice given me by a kindly peasant, but it is equally true that I also am sometimes the guest in the palace of a great Maharajah and a slave girl is appointed to wave a peacock feather fan over me all night long! I am used to temptation and you need not fear for me!"

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. . . I asked my mother's sister, Katharine (Mrs. Robert W. Hamil) what she could add to my scattered memories. She was a bride and had her own home. So she was not at her mother's and father's so very much. She recalled Swamiji much as I did, but never heard him lecture. However, she and her husband were "young intellectuals" and had a group of young professors from our university, young newspaper men, etc. around them. One Sunday evening she was telling them how remarkable Swamiji was and they said that modern scientists and psychologists could "show up" his religious beliefs in no time! She said, "If I can persuade him to come here next Sunday evening, will you all come back and meet him?" They agreed and Swamiji met them all at an informal supper party. My aunt does not recall just what subjects were brought up, but that the entire evening was a lively and interesting debate on all sorts of ideas. Aunt Katharine said that Swamiji's great knowledge of the Bible and the Koran as well as the various Oriental religions, his grasp of science and of psychology were astounding. Before the evening was over the "doubting Thomases" threw up their hands and admitted that Swamiji had held his own on every point and they parted from him with warmest admiration and affection.

During the two months Swamiji lived in Chicago, he not only lectured in and about the city, but absorbed all kinds of information regarding the workings of Western civilization, in so far as such information could be of benefit to India. Chicago offered him a broad field of study, for there is little representative of the West that cannot be found there; and this was as true in 1893 as it is today.

The Chicago correspondent of the *Critic,* Lucy Monroe, whose article of October 7 was quoted in the last chapter, again wrote about Swamiji on November 11. Lucy Monroe, it might be mentioned here, was a sister of Harriet Monroe, the poetess, whose vivid description of Swamiji has also been quoted. Unlike her sister, Lucy Monroe went to hear Swamiji more than once, not merely because of her duty as a reporter but, to judge from her articles, because of her personal appreciation of him. A small portion of the following report may be familiar to the reader, for, by way of illustrating the fact that he was proving to America that Hindus "are

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not savages," Swamiji himself quoted from it in a letter to India. The full report reads as follows:

THE CHICAGO LETTER

. . . It was an outgrowth of the Parliament of Religions, which opened our eyes to the fact that the philosophy of the ancient creeds contains much beauty for the moderns. When we had once clearly perceived this, our interest in their exponents quickened, and with characteristic eagerness we set out in pursuit of knowledge. The most available means of obtaining it, after the close of the Parliament, was through the addresses and lectures of Suami Vivekananda, who is still in this city. His original purpose in coming to this country was to interest Americans in the starting of new industries among the Hindoos, but he has abandoned this for the present, because he finds that, as "the Americans are the most charitable people in the world," every man with a purpose comes here for assistance in carrying it out. When asked about the relative condition of the poor here and in India, he replied that our poor would be princes there, and that he had been taken through the worst quarter of the city only to find it, from the standpoint of his knowledge, comfortable and even pleasant.

A Brahmin of the Brahmins, Vivekananda gave up his rank to join the brotherhood of monks, where all pride of caste is voluntarily relinquished. And yet he bears the mark of race upon his person. His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindoo civilization. He is an interesting figure, his fine, intelligent, mobile face in its setting of yellows, and his deep, musical voice prepossessing one at once in his favor. So it is not strange that he has been taken up by the literary clubs, has preached and lectured in churches, until the life of Buddha and the doctrines of his faith have grown familiar to us. He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art, the most convincing sincerity ; and rising at times to a rich, inspiring eloquence. As learned and cultivated, apparently, as the most accomplished Jesuit, he has also something Jesuitical in the character of his mind ; but

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though the little sarcasms thrown into his discourses are as keen as a rapier, they are so delicate as to be lost on many of his hearers. Nevertheless his courtesy is unfailing, for these thrusts are never pointed so directly at our customs as to be rude. At present he contents himself with enlightening us in regard to his religion and the words of its philosophers. He looks forward to the time when we shall pass beyond idolatry—now necessary in his opinion to the ignorant classes,—beyond worship, even, to a knowledge of the presence of God in nature, of the divinity and responsibility of man. "Work out your own salvation," he says with the dying Buddha ; "I cannot help you. No man can help you. Help yourself."

In connection with the above statement that Swamiji had abandoned his purpose of interesting Americans in the starting of new industries among the Hindus, the second hitherto unpublished letter to Prof. Wright clarifies his ideas on the subject:

c/of J. Lyons 262 Michigan av.
Chicago
26 October '93

Dear Adhyapakji

You would be glad to know that I am doing well here and that almost everybody has been very kind to me, except of course the very orthodox. Many of the men brought together here from far off lands have got projects and ideas and missions to carry out and America is the only place where there is a chance of success for everything. But I thought better and have given up speaking about my project entirely—because I am sure now—the heathen draws more than his project. So I want to go to work earnestly for my own project only keeping the project in the background and working like any other lecturer.

He who has brought me hither and has not left me yet will not leave me ever I am here. You will be glad to know that I am doing well and expect to do very well in the way of getting money. Of course I am too green in the business but would soon learn my trade. I am very popular in Chicago So I want to stay here a little more and get *money*.

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Tomorrow I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies' fortnightly club—which is the most influential in this city. How to thank you my kind friend or Him who brought you to me—for now I think the success of my project probable and it is you who have made it so.

May blessings and happiness attend every step of your progress in this world.

My love and blessings to your children

Yours affly ever
Vivekananda

In September, 1894, almost a year after the Parliament, the *Interocean,* a Chicago newspaper, ran an article on Swamiji, which I have referred to before and which included a sentence pertinent to the weeks with which we are concerned at present:

> . . . Vivekananda lingered in Chicago for several months after the great Parliament of Religions closed, studying many questions relating to schools and the material advancement of civilization in order to carry back to his own people as convincing arguments regarding America as he brought to this country concerning the morality and spirituality of his own people.

Although Swamiji "lingered in Chicago" for so long a time, the only definite information we have at present regarding his lectures in the city comes from his letter of October 26 (quoted above), in which he says: "Tomorrow [October 27] I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies' fortnightly club—which is the most influential in this city." We have, however, been able to gather from the contemporary newspapers a few reports regarding his lecture engagements in neighboring towns. As has been seen in his letter of October 2, Swamiji visited Evanston, a city just north of Chicago, where Prof. Wright's friend, Dr. Bradley, lived. The Evanston lecture engagement was made almost immediately after the Parliament in conjunction with Dr. Carl von Bergen, a fellow delegate from Stockholm, Sweden. Dr. von Bergen, to judge from a photograph published in "Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions," was a rather formidable, beetle-browed man, bald-headed and bewhiskered. According to the records, he spoke only once at the Parliament, giving on the

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opening day a short talk in which he made it clear that the broad and tolerant outlook of the Christian church in Sweden long antedated that of the Parliament of Religions. The conception that all religions have a measure of good in them was not new to him. We have reason to believe that von Bergen was one of those delegates who later developed a friendship with Swamiji, for we find that he attended a small and intimate luncheon in his company many months after the Parliament. But of this, more later.

The first information regarding the Evanston lectures was found in the *Chicago Evening Journal* of September 29, 1893, in the form of a preliminary announcement:

ALTRUISM OF CHRISTIANITY

It Will Be Contrasted with Hindoo Ethics in Lectures at Evanston

Suami Vivekananda, a representative from India to the recent World's Parliament of Religions, and Dr. Carl Von Bergen, a representative from Scandinavia, will give three lectures in Evanston beginning to-morrow evening. The other lectures will be given on Tuesday and Thursday evenings of next week in the Congregational Church. The subjects for Saturday evenings are "Altruism in Christianity; illustrated by the life of Catherine of Siena, the herald of pure Christianity in the middle ages," by Dr. Von Bergen; "Hindu Altruism," by Suami Vivekananda. Tuesday evening, "Monism," Suami Vivekananda; "Lord Shaftesbury, the most earnest philanthropist of our age," Dr. Von Bergen. On this evening John W. Hutchinson will sing a number of the old time songs which have made him so famous. Thursday evening, "Huldine Beamish: the founder of the Edelweiss," Dr. Von Bergen. "Reincarnation," Suami Vivekananda.

The first announcements in the Evanston papers of this lecture course appeared in the *Evanston Press* and the *Evanston Index*, September 23, four days before the close of the Parliament. The announcement in the *Press* read as follows:

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NEWS NOTES

> SUAMI VIVEKANANDA is the brilliant Hindu monk at the Parliament of religions. He has been the center of attraction on all occasions, not only by his "Baltimore Oriole" dress, but by his beaming countenance, his perfect unconsciousness [sic] and his marvelous eloquence in expounding Hindu philosophy. This brilliant orator has been engaged to give a course of three lectures in Evanston beginning Saturday, Sept. 30.

The announcement in the *Evanston Index* was much the same as that above, and I will not burden the reader with it here, except to say that the *Index* referred to Swamiji himself—not his dress—as "the Baltimore Oriole." Notices in both papers appeared also on September 30, giving the additional information that admission to one lecture was fifty cents, and to the course of three, one dollar.

Since both Evanston papers were weeklies, it was not until Swamiji and Dr. von Bergen had completed their three lectures that the *Evanston Press* and the *Evanston Index* each ran a report on the series. The report in the *Evanston Index* of October 7, 1893, which is the more comprehensive, reads as follows (I have omitted those passages which relate only to Dr. Carl von Bergen):

RELIGIOUS LECTURES

> At the Congregational Church, during the past week, there have been given a course of lectures which in nature much resembled the Religious Parliament which has just been completed. The lecturers were Dr. Carl von Bergen, of Sweden, and Suami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk. . . . Suami Vivekananda is a representative from India to the Parliament of Religions. He has attracted a great deal of attention on account of his unique attire in Mandarin colors, by his magnetic presence and by his brilliant oratory and wonderful exposition of Hindu philosophy. His stay in Chicago has been a continual ovation. The course of lectures was arranged to cover three evenings. [The lectures of Saturday and Tuesday evenings are listed without comment; then the article continues:] On Thursday evening Oct. 5, Dr. von Bergen spoke on "Huldine Beamish, the

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Founder of the King's Daughters of Sweden," and "Reincarnation" was the subject treated by the Hindu monk. The latter was very interesting; the views being those that are not often heard in this part of the world. The doctrine of reincarnation of the soul, while comparatively new and little understood in this country, is well-known in the east, being the foundation of nearly all the religions of those people. Those that do not use it as dogma, do not say anything against it. The main point to be decided in regard to the doctrine is, as to whether we have had a past. We know that we have a present and feel sure of a future. Yet how can there be a present without a past? Modern science has proved that matter exists and continues to exist. Creation is merely a change in appearance. We are not sprung out of nothing. Some regard God as the common cause of everything and judge this a sufficient reason for existence. But in everything we must consider the phenomena; whence and from what matter springs. The same arguments that prove there is a future prove that there is a past. It is necessary that there should be causes other than God's will. Heredity is not able to give sufficient cause. Some say that we are not conscious of a former existence. Many cases have been found where there are distinct reminiscences of a past. And here lies the germ of the theory. Because the Hindu is kind to dumb animals many believe that we believe in the reincarnation of souls in lower orders. They are not able to conceive of kindness to dumb animals being other than the result of superstition. An ancient Hindu priest defines religion as anything that lifts one up. Brutality is driven out, humanity gives way to divinity. The theory of incarnation does not confine man to this small earth. His soul can go to other, higher earths where he will be a loftier being, possessing, instead of five senses, eight, and continuing in this way he will at length approach the acme of perfection, divinity, and will be allowed to drink deep of oblivion in the "Islands of the Blest."

I will not give here the report on the lectures that appeared in the *Evanston Press* of the same date, for nothing additional is to be learned from it except that "Mrs. Elizabeth Boynton Herbert enter-

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tained the lecturers at her residence Thursday evening, and here the third lectures were delivered."

Another evidence of Swamiji's lecturing outside of Chicago comes from the letter, given in the first chapter, which he wrote to Mrs. Tannatt Woods on October 10, 1893. ". . . Just now," Swamiji wrote, "I am lecturing about Chicago—and am doing very well—it is ranging from 30 to 80 dollars a lecture . . . Yesterday I returned from Streator where I got 87 dollars for a lecture. I have engagements every day this week. . . ."

Streator is a relatively small city, ninety miles southwest of Chicago. To judge from the announcement which appeared in the *Streator Daily Free Press* of October 5, 1893, the prices of admission to Swamiji's lecture, delivered in the Plumb Opera House, were twenty-five cents for the first floor and thirty-five cents for the balcony! By a mathematical process, and allowing for the percentage taken by the manager of the house, one can arrive at the conclusion that Swamiji's audience consisted of approximately six hundred people. But although the lecture was well attended, the *Streator Daily Free Press* of October 9 ran the following somewhat dreary review:

VIVEKANANDA

The lecture of this celebrated Hindoo at the Opera House, Saturday night, was very interesting. By comparative philology, he sought to establish the long admitted relationship between the Aryan races and their descendants in the new world. He mildly defended the caste system of India which keeps three-fourths of the people in utter and humiliating subjection, and boasted that the India of today was the same India that had watched for centuries the meteoric nations of the world flash across the horizon and sink into oblivion. In common with the people, he loves the past. He lives not for self, but for God. In his country a premium is placed on beggary and tramps, though not so distinguished in his lecture. When the meal is prepared, they wait for some man to come along who is first served, then the animals, the servants, the man of the house and lastly the woman of the household. Boys are taken at 10 years of age and are kept by professors for a period of ten to twenty years, educated

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and sent forth to resume their former occupations or to engage in a life of endless wandering, preaching, and praying, taking along only that which is given them to eat and wear, but never touching money. Vivekananda is of the latter class. Men approaching old age withdraw from the world, and after a period of study and prayer, when they feel themselves sanctified, they also go forward spreading the gospel. He observed that leisure was necessary for intellectual development and scored Americans for not educating the Indians whom Columbus found in a state of savagery. In this he exhibited a lack of knowledge of conditions. His talk was lamentably short and much was left unsaid of seeming greater importance than much that was said.

It is clear from the above report that the American press, for one reason or another, did not always give Swamiji an enthusiastic reception.

To date, these reports are all we have been able to gather in connection with his side trips from Chicago, although undoubtedly there are many more waiting to be found.

II

In regard to Swamiji's state of mind during this period, the reader has gathered a little from his letters to Professor Wright. Additional new material indicates what a blessed state it was—a state which, despite his incessant activity, was one of perfect peace. How fortunate were those who knew him at this time, for his inner serenity was such that it shone out as a blessing and a revelation. An excerpt from a newly discovered letter written to Swamiji by Mrs. Hale is illustrative of this fact. Although this letter was written long after the Parliament, it will not be amiss to quote here the following passage in which Mrs. Hale recalls Swamiji as

> . . . the great and glorious soul that came to the Parliament of Religions, so full of love of God, that his face shone with Divine light, whose words were fire, whose very presence created an atmosphere of harmony and purity, thereby drawing all souls to himself.

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One look at a hitherto unpublished photograph which has recently come to our hands is enough to show us something of what Mrs. Hale meant, for one cannot fail to be moved by the childlike tenderness of Swamiji's appearance, and by the wonderful peace and calm of his expression. Inasmuch as this picture was copyrighted in Washington by the photographer, it was evidently taken after Swamiji had become famous, that is, after the first day of the Parliament. It has come to us along with a group of five other photographs, all of which, there is reason to believe, were taken in September of 1893, and all of which have been published. One of these is no doubt familiar to the reader; it is that in which Swamiji stands with arms folded across his chest and which was used as a colored poster during Parliament days. All six pictures are autographed by Swamiji and inscribed with English translations from Sanskrit mottoes, some with the original Sanskrit written in Bengali characters. The mottoes are as follows:

1. Ajaramaravat prajnah vidyam
arthancha chintayet
Grihita-iva kesheshu mrityuna
dharmam acharet

When in search of knowledge or prosperity think that you would never have death or disease, and when worshipping God think that death's hand is in your hair.

2. Eka eva suhrid dharma
nidhanepyanuyati yah

Virtue is the only friend which follows us even beyond the grave.

Everything else ends with death.

Vivekananda

3. One infinite pure and holy—beyond thought beyond qualities I bow down to thee

Swami Vivekananda

4. Samata sarva-bhuteshu etanmuktasya lakshanam

Equality in all beings this is the sign of the free

Vivekananda

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AFTER THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

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5. Thou art the only treasure in this world
Vivekananda

6. Thou art the father the lord the mother the husband and love
Swami Vivekananda

It is through the kindness of Swami Vishwananda, who is in charge of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society in Chicago, that these photographs and other invaluable material regarding Swamiji have come to our hands, and it is with his assent that we are making them known. The story of how this material was discovered by Swami Vishwananda is worth telling here, for it is an example of those coincidences that occur so frequently in matters concerning Swamiji. Swami Vishwananda tells us that a young man, unconnected with Vedanta, had received from his grandmother a bundle of unpublished letters, photographs and other material, all pertaining to Swami Vivekananda. Knowing that his grandmother had cherished them, the young man had kept them, and indeed might still possess them, or perhaps by this time have discarded them, had it not been that a friend of his was a student of Swami Vishwananda. How this friend came to know of the bundle of old documents is not known, but one day she told Swami Vishwananda of its existence. The Swami forthwith visited the young man and found, with what joy we can imagine, a veritable feast of hitherto unknown material! The young man gladly gave him the bundle, which had originally belonged, the Swami tells us, to Miss Isabelle McKindley, a niece of Mr. and Mrs. Hale. It is discoveries such as this which give us hope that eventually more hidden material regarding Swamiji will come to light, slowly pushing its way up through the years.

But to return to Swamiji as he was during the Chicago days following the Parliament. Perhaps the clearest indication of his exalted state is given in a letter that Swami Vishwananda received in 1939 from Sarat Chandra Chakravarti, a disciple of Swamiji whose diary is published in "The Complete Works." A translated portion of this letter reads as follows:

> . . . Swamiji once told me that one moonlight night when he was on the shore of Lake Michigan his mind began to merge in Brahman. Suddenly he saw Sri Ramakrishna

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and he remembered the Work for which he had come to this world, and then his mind came down and again turned toward the fulfillment of his mission. I recorded this in my diary, but I did not think it necessary to make it public; therefore I have not published it as yet. I am letting only you know. . . .

In what transcendent spiritual state Swamiji lived at the very time when the world was his for the asking! The doors of the rich, the socially prominent, the brilliant, were all open to him, and everywhere he was in demand. But Swamiji's difficulty, it would seem, was not to lift his mind above the world that pressed about him on all sides but, for the sake of his work, to hold it down.

During the months Swamiji remained in Chicago after the Parliament of Religions, he must have been the house guest of various friends. He himself writes of this period: "Many of the handsomest houses in this city are open to me. All the time I am living as a guest of somebody or other." As we know, one of the homes that was always open to him and where he stayed both during and after the Parliament was that of Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lyons at 262 Michigan Avenue. Unfortunately, however, we do not know at the present time who Swamiji's other hosts were, but from the fact that a letter dated November 19, 1893, which he wrote to Mrs. Tannatt Woods (see Chapter One) was written on stationery bearing the letterhead: George W. Hale, 541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, we can judge that he was a guest of the Hale family for at least part of the time. The Hales were excellent hosts, treating him from the first as a cherished member of the family and understanding him, perhaps not fully, but far better than most.

The Hale home was a block and a half from Lincoln Park, and there Swamiji sometimes went to sit in the sun and open air. I have recently heard of a touching and revealing incident that took place during these outings. It seems that each day as Swamiji sat in the park, a young woman and a little girl six years old would pass by on their way to the market. One day the woman, no doubt convinced that the young Hindu was kind and trustworthy, asked him if she might leave her child in his charge while she went about her marketing. Swamiji assured her that she might, and thenceforth each morning that they met in the park, Swamiji took the little girl into his care. But the story does not end here. When the child had grown to fifteen or sixteen her mother came upon a picture of Swamiji, of whose fame

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Mrs. George W. Hale at 18

Mrs. George W. Hale

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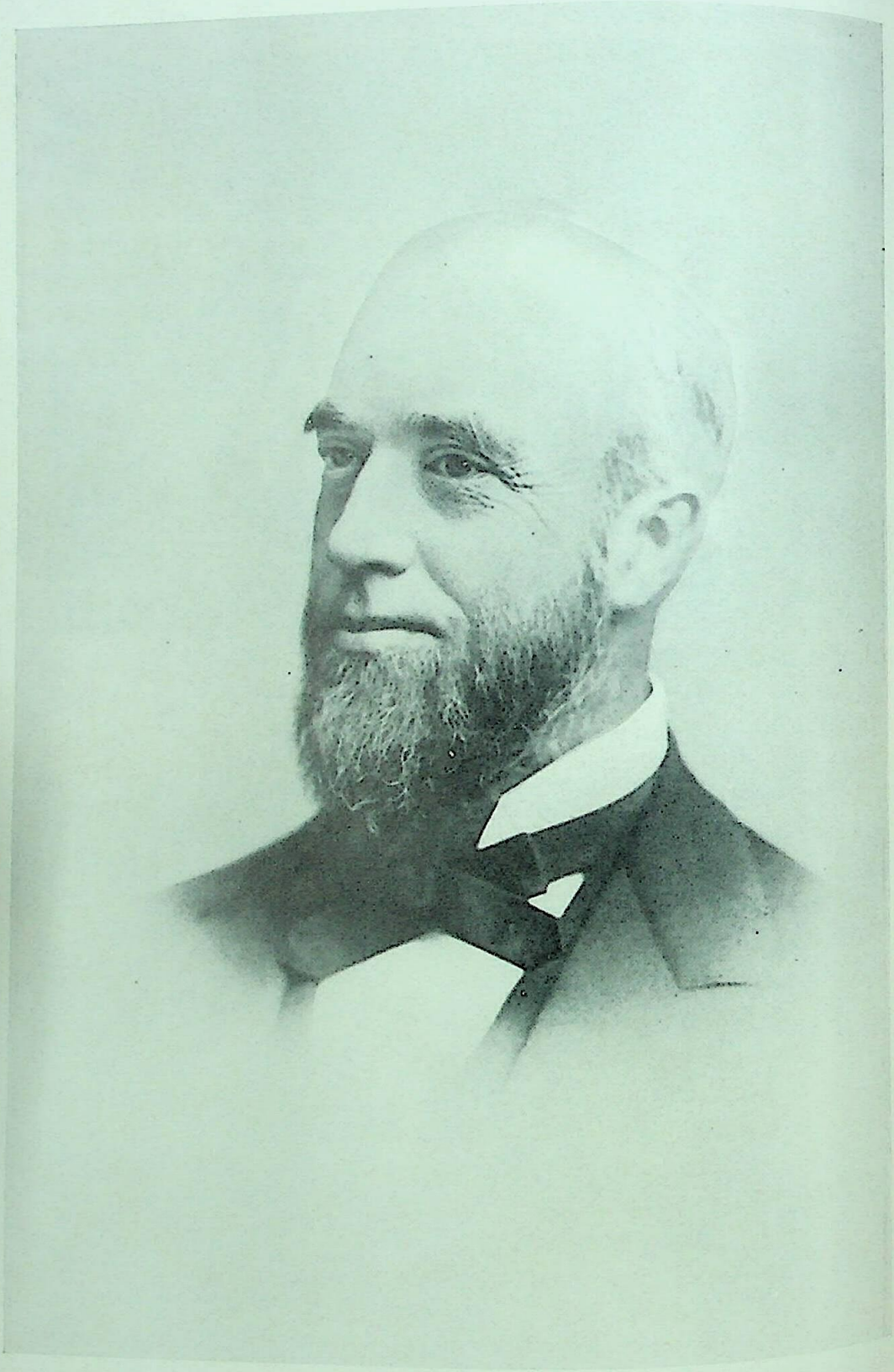

MR. GEORGE W. HALE

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she had by that time learned, and showing it to her daughter, asked, "Do you remember your friend?" She remembered; for who knowing Swamiji even at the age of six could forget? Later, after she had married and moved to Philadelphia, the memory of Swamiji again became vivid in her mind, drawing her to the spiritual life. She became a student of Swami Akhilananda, who used to visit that city now and then to meet with a group of devotees. How many small happenings such as that of a mother leaving her child in his charge must have taken place throughout Swamiji's visit to America, how many chance contacts he had with people whose path was led upward through his touch or glance, we can only guess.

The Hale family, of whom more later, were perhaps the most fortunate of all; for, as is known, not only was Swamiji their guest from time to time, but he made their home his headquarters during almost all of 1894, before the pivot of his activities moved eastward to the Atlantic Coast. It was on George W. Hale's letter paper and thus, presumably, during one of his stays in the latter's home, that Swamiji jotted down in pencil a series of notes on the subjects of reason, faith and love, which have recently come to light. Unfortunately the date of the manuscript cannot be accurately determined, but inasmuch as Swamiji wrote these notes in the sanctuary that the Hales offered him in Chicago, I think their reproduction here will not be out of place. I am giving them exactly as they appear in the original:

Reason—has its limits—its base—
its degeneration. The walls round it—
Agnosticism. Atheism. But must not stop
The beyond is acting upon influencing us every
moment—the sky the stars acting upon us—even
those not seen. Therefore must go beyond—reason
alone can't go—finite can not get at the infinite
Faith its degeneration when alone—bigotry
fanaticism—sectarianism. Narrowing
finite ∴ can not get to the infinite
Sometimes gain in intensity but looses [sic] in
extensity—and in bigots & fanatics become
worship of his own pride & vanity
Is there no other way—there is Love
it never degenerates—peaceful softening

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ever widening—the universe is too small
for its expansiveness.

We can not define it we can only trace
it through its development and describe its
surroundings

It is at first—what the gravitation
is to the external world—a tendency to unification
forms and conventionalities are its death.
Worship through forms—methods—services
forms—up to then no love.

When love comes method dies.
Human language and human forms
God as father, God as mother, God as
the lover—Surata-vardhanam etc. Solomon's Song of
Songs—Dependence and independence
Love Love—

Love the chaste wife—Anasuya Sita—
not as hard dry duty but as ever pleasing
love—Sita worship—

The madness of Love—God intoxicated man
The allegory of Radha—misunderstood
The restriction more increase—
Lust is the death of love
Self is the death of love
individual to general
Concrete to abstract—to absolute
The praying Mahomedan and the girl
The Sympathy—Kavir—
The Christian nun from whose hands blood came
The Mahomedan Saint
Every particle seeking its own compliment [sic]
When it finds that it is at rest
Every man seeking—happiness—& stability
The search is real but the objects are themselves
but happiness is coming to them momentary at least
through the search of these objects.

The only object unchangable and the only compliment
of character and aspirations of the human Soul is God

Love is struggle of a human Soul to find its
compliment its stable equilibrium its infinite rest

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While Swamiji was in Chicago, word of his great and saving spiritual power spread from person to person, and very likely many came to him for private interviews seeking help and guidance. A story of one such interview has been recounted by Mme. Emma Calvé in her autobiography, "My Life," and subsequently reproduced in "The Life of Swami Vivekananda." But Mme. Calvé evidently did not choose to tell the whole story in her book. We are fortunate enough to have in our possession an account of this same meeting as she told it to a sympathetic friend long before she wrote her memoirs. It is to Mme. Paul Verdier, of Paris and San Francisco, that we are indebted for this earlier and more complete version, for it was she to whom Calvé confided the following story and who shortly after hearing it jotted it down.

Apparently it was in March of 1894, when Emma Calvé was visiting Chicago with the Metropolitan Opera Company, that she first met Swamiji. She was at the peak of her career, having recently had a tremendous success in Europe and New York with her dramatic interpretation of the role of Carmen. The world was at her feet; she was entertained, as are most celebrities, by the cream of society, and had become friendly with whomever Swamiji was staying with at this time (most likely not the Hales). But Calvé, the toast of two continents, was possessed of a temperament that rarely makes for happiness. Tempestuous, headstrong and sensuous, she was, it would seem, frequently involved in emotional attachments. The most recent and most deeply felt of these had just come to an unhappy end, leaving her desolate. Her only comfort was her daughter, who had accompanied her to Chicago and upon whom she lavished her love. I shall let Mme. Verdier's notes tell the rest of the story, for they more closely approximate Mme. Calvé's own words:

> She [Calvé] told me that one evening at the opera where she was singing Carmen her voice had never been so beautiful, and although she felt nervous going to the theatre, she had after the first act a tremendous success.
>
> During the first intermission she suddenly felt terribly depressed and thought she would not continue the second act, but with a great effort she succeeded in getting ready, and although she had the impression she would not be able to sing, she sang magnificently. Right after the second act, coming back to her dressing room she almost collapsed and

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asked the manager to announce she was ill. She was more depressed than before and had difficulty in breathing. The manager and people around her insisted so, that finally she continued and was almost carried to the stage for the last act. She told me that at that minute she made the greatest effort of her life to finish the performance. She also said that it was the day she sang her best and the public gave her a tremendous ovation. She ran to her dressing room without waiting for the applause, and when she saw several people and the manager waiting for her with sad faces, she knew something tragic had happened.

The tragedy was that her daughter, who had been in a house of a friend that evening, was dead, having been burned to death during the performance of Carmen. Calvé collapsed.

Then came the period of days during which she wanted to commit suicide. Her friend Mrs. X was constantly with her, trying to comfort her, asking, begging her to come to her house to see Swamiji. Calvé constantly refused. She told me that her only thought was to commit suicide by throwing herself in the lake. Three different times she left her house to drown herself and took the direction of the lake, and each time as though in a daze she found herself on the road to Swamiji's house. She said it was like awaking from a dream. And each time she came back home. Finally, the fourth or fifth time, she found herself on the threshold of her friend's house, the butler opening the door. She went in and sat in a deep chair in the living room. She was there for a while as in a dream, she said, when she heard a voice coming from the next room saying, "Come, my child. Don't be afraid." And automatically she got up and entered into the study where Swamiji was sitting behind a large table-desk.

From here on the story as it is quoted in "The Life" is substantially the same as that told to Mme. Verdier, and therefore I will not repeat it. The reader knows how Swamiji brought peace to Mme. Calvé's grief-stricken heart, and that for the rest of her life she was grateful to him.

There is yet another story which Mme. Calvé told regarding this period of Swamiji's life. Unfortunately we are not in a position to authenticate it, but it is not in essence an unlikely story, and at the

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MME. EMMA CALVÉ

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risk of providing material for the start of a legend I think that I should let Swamiji's followers know of it. The story is related in Mme. Verdier's journal from notes taken during conversations with Mme. Calvé and reads as follows:

> Mr. X, in whose home Swamiji was staying in Chicago, was a partner or an associate in some business with John D. Rockefeller. Many times John D. heard his friends talking about this extraordinary and wonderful Hindu monk who was staying with them, and many times he had been invited to meet Swamiji, but, for one reason or another, always refused. At that time Rockefeller was not yet at the peak of his fortune, but was already powerful and strong-willed, very difficult to handle and a hard man to advise.
>
> But one day, although he did not want to meet Swamiji, he was pushed to it by an impulse and went directly to the house of his friends, brushing aside the butler who opened the door and saying that he wanted to see the Hindu monk.
>
> The butler ushered him into the living room, and, not waiting to be announced, Rockefeller entered into Swamiji's adjoining study and was much surprised, I presume, to see Swamiji behind his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered.
>
> After a while, as with Calvé, Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to any but himself, and made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, that he was only a channel and that his duty was to do good to the world—that God had given him all his wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help and do good to people.
>
> Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him that way and tell him what to do. He left the room in irritation, not even saying goodbye. But about a week after, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study and, finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution.
>
> "Well, there you are," he said. "You must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it."
>
> Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move. Then

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taking the paper, he quietly read it, saying: "It is for you to thank me." That was all. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare.

The reader can make of this what he will. Except for the fact that it was about this time that Rockefeller entered upon his career of philanthropy, there is nothing in the published accounts of his life to corroborate the story that he was inspired by Swamiji. But on the other hand, this is so intimate a story that it is unlikely it would find its way into the biographies of a financier. We do know that in his own way Rockefeller was interested in religion, and once, almost as though echoing Swamiji, he said, explaining the reason behind his great philanthropies: "There is more to life than the accumulation of money. Money is only a trust in one's hands. To use it improperly is a great sin. The best way to prepare for the end of life is to live for others. That is what I am trying to do." ("John D. Rockefeller" by B. F. Winkleman, page 213.)

A definite picture of Swamiji's life in Chicago begins now to emerge. We see him in the full bloom of his youth, his face shining with a heavenly light, fulfilling many lecture engagements, and no doubt many social engagements, taking a keen interest in Western life and institutions, and explaining India's life and culture in their true significance. That fraction of his mind with which he attended to the world was brilliantly alert—indeed, was in itself far more than a match for the keenest intellect. But we see also that this fraction was informed and illumined by a far larger part that lay quiet and untouched beneath the surface, always absorbed in God, ready to pour out blessings upon and alter the lives of those who came to him for help. How often Swamiji verged upon nirvikalpa samadhi, only to be drawn back by Sri Ramakrishna, or by his own love and compassion for man, in order that he might fulfill his mission here, we cannot know; but we can assume that he always lived on the borderline between the relative and the Absolute, as a prophet of his supreme eminence must.

III

It is still not known exactly when Swamiji felt it advisable to enlist with a lecture bureau. Unfortunately we cannot be much

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more precise than "The Life" which tells us that "it must have been in the very late autumn or the early winter months when, to use his own expression, he 'began to whirl to and fro.'" Although it must indeed have been around this time that the lecture tour started, Swamiji used the expression "I was whirling to and fro" at a much later date and in connection with his rapid travel between New York and Boston. He actually tells very little about his mid-Western "whirlings," or when and why he had joined a lecture bureau. But if his purpose was to broadcast the truth regarding Indian religion, culture and customs, which had been so systematically and thoroughly misrepresented to this country by Christian missionaries, and if he felt that he must earn money both for his own support and for the work in India, then to engage himself with a lecture bureau would seem the logical step for him to take. Then, as now, lecture bureaus, concert agencies, impresarios, etc. were necessary evils to anyone who would come before the general public throughout America, there being no other way to make coordinated engagements in many towns. The expedience of this move may have occurred to Swamiji as early as November 2, for in a letter written on that date he speaks of the fact that "a Christian lady from Poona, Miss Sorabji, and the Jain representative, Mr. Gandhi, are going to remain longer in the country and make lecture tours." From this we can gather that while Swamiji had not yet made any definite plans, he may have been considering the advantages of enlisting with a lecture bureau.

One is surprised to learn, however, that when he did engage himself he signed a three-year contract! It is in a sense difficult to understand this, for although Swamiji was uncertain of the future at this time, he had little intention of remaining in America for three years, and certainly would not have wanted to commit himself to do so. It is also difficult to understand why no one warned him that almost as a matter of course attempts would be made to exploit him, unless it were that his friends were as naive in this respect as was he. In any case, if one is to believe what one reads in newspapers, he did sign a long-term contract. This information is to be found in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 21, 1894, a Memphis, Tennessee, newspaper. "He," this paper says, meaning "Swami Vive Kananda," "is under contract with the 'Slayton Lyceum Bureau,' of Chicago, to fill a three-years' engagement in this country." In this connection it might be mentioned that in the "Memoirs of Sister Christine" as published in the February 1931 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata,* it is

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said, "after the Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda was induced to place himself under the direction of Pond's Lecture Bureau and make a lecture tour of the United States." There is, however, no record of a Pond's Lecture Bureau having existed in Chicago in the 1890's and "Pond's" may have been merely another way of designating the Slayton Lyceum Bureau, which did exist. The correct name of the bureau with which Swamiji enlisted is of no little consequence, for consider how valuable would be the files of that bureau if found! Perhaps among them, still undestroyed, is a list of all the towns Swamiji visited while under contract and the dates on which he spoke. In trying to follow his footsteps across America scarcely a greater find could be conceived. However, little by little, even without this help we are able to fill in the gaps—although, to be sure, many remain.

One thing that should perhaps be of some consolation to those who would like to see all the gaps filled in the story of Swamiji's life, is the fact that his brother monks and friends in India had an even more difficult time than we in attempting to keep track of him. By way of illustrating this, let me give here a letter of some poignancy, written at the direction of those whose hearts ached to hear of the doings and triumphs of their beloved Swamiji in this strange land. The letter was addressed to Thos. Cook and Sons, Calcutta:

Dear Sirs—

Swami Vivekananda
Care Mr. Geo. W. Hale
541 Dearborn Ave
Chicago

The above Hindu monk has been travelling under Messrs Tho. Cook & Sons Agency. Your Bombay people arranged last year for his passage to America where he went to represent the Hindu religion at the Parliament of Religions held in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago—Swami Vivekananda is reported to have delivered several lectures in America, a few of which only are reproduced or noticed in the Indian papers—But as the extracts and notices that appeared here are believed to be unsatisfactory, the brother monks and admirers of Swamiji are anxious to obtain all the American papers or cuttings thereof as most convenient containing all the speeches that have been delivered in and

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THE HALE RESIDENCE, CHICAGO

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about Chicago, and in fact wherever he spoke in America, these to include all newspaper notices or criticisms both for and against that are known to have appeared, but not to include the Report of the Parliament of Religions issued by the Secretary of the Chicago Exhibition, a copy of which has already been secured from here. Under the circumstances the undersigned on behalf of the brother monks and admirers of Swami Vivekananda shall be very much obliged if you will kindly arrange, owing to the excellent facilities you possess on a/c of your numerous agencies and branches, with your people at Chicago for the collection of papers and pamphlets named above together with one or two copies of photos if they are in circulation, and have them all forwarded to your care, the express thereof shall be paid by Swamiji's admirers through the undersigned. Further the only address known of Swami Vivekananda is noted as above. It is quite possible that Swamiji has or will have left the place ere this reaches your Chicago Agent, therefore I beg to ask you to kindly write and inform your Chicago Agent to put himself in communication with Mr. Hale or any other party regarding the movements of Swami Vivekananda, who according to the rules of Hindu Sannyasi (ascetic) will not write and inform of his whereabouts, which information however is so anxiously looked for by his admirers and brother monks—

Yours obediently
Kali Krishna Dutta
Cashier & Accountant
Thos Cook & Sons
Calcutta

10-1 Old Court House St.
Calcutta 28th March/94

Although Swamiji often wrote to his Madras disciples, he did not, as we know, communicate with his brother monks until he had been in America nearly nine months. From "The Letters" we find that his letter written on March 19, 1894, to Swami Ramakrishnananda (not, as is stated in the English edition, to Swami Brahmananda), was his first to any one of them. It is little wonder, then, that they were eager for news! It is a puzzle why Swamiji

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did not write so much as a line to his brother monks during the time he was writing regularly to his Madras disciples. Had he grown out of the habit of writing to them through a long separation? Or was he not yet prepared to offer them the new program which was taking shape in his mind, wanting perhaps to initiate it through his own disciples? Or, again, was he waiting for a command from On High before asking his brothers to follow his ideas? Yet another and more simple explanation presents itself: during this time most of the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were still wandering through India and were as hard to trace as was Swamiji himself. The difficulty with this answer is that when Swamiji wanted to communicate his plans to his brother monks, he found their dispersion over India no particular drawback. It was possibly in April of 1894 that he wrote to Swami Shivananda asking that he call all the monks back to the Math to begin work. Almost immediately after receiving this letter, Swami Shivananda met Swami Brahmananda and Swami Turiyananda in Lucknow and relayed Swamiji's request to them. Swami Turiyananda returned to Calcutta in August, while Swami Brahmananda went first to Brindavan, not leaving there for Calcutta until November or December. Gradually all returned. Although between March and September Swamiji may have written his brother monks, such letters are to date unknown. From November forward, however, his published letters to them are frequent. They do not give much news of his external life, it is true, but they give something better—the power of his inspiration and vision that was to revolutionize the concept of monasticism in India.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE MIDWESTERN TOUR

I

The first definite knowledge we have of the date on which Swamiji left Illinois to widen his field of activity is contained in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Tannatt Woods on November 11, 1893. This letter was included in the first chapter of this book, and the reader will perhaps remember that Swamiji said in it, "I am starting to-morrow for Madison and Minneapolis." This departure from Chicago marked the beginning of Swamiji's famous and important lecture tour of the Midwest and South, which lasted until April of 1894. But although the tour is famous and important, I have been able to gather information about Swamiji's lectures in only four cities prior to his visit to Detroit in February of 1894. I have found that he visited not only Madison, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, in November of 1893 but, in the same month, Des Moines, Iowa. These three cities constituted the first listings on his Midwestern itinerary. Another discovery is that Swamiji visited Memphis, Tennessee, in January, 1894. The new information regarding his visits to these towns still leaves a large blank in our knowledge, but I believe it will nevertheless give a more or less representative idea of the tour as a whole.

Although Swamiji started for Madison from Chicago on November 12, his lecture there was not given until November 20, as is indicated by the following somewhat meager report from the *Wisconsin State Journal* of November 21:

GAVE AN INTERESTING LECTURE

The lecture at the Congregational church last night by the celebrated Hindoo monk, Vivekananda, was an extremely interesting one, and contained much of sound philosophy and good religion. Pagan though he be, Christianity may well follow many of his teachings. His creed is as wide as

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the universe, taking in all religions, and accepting truth wherever it may be found. Bigotry and superstition and idle ceremony, he declared, have no place in "the religions of India."

Following is a report of Swamiji's lecture in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from the *Minneapolis Star* of November 25:

THE HINDOO RELIGION.

Its Principles and Truths Set Forth in a Clear and Forceful Manner in a Lecture by Swami Vive Kananda.

"Brahminism" in all its subtle attraction, because of its embodiment of ancient and truthful principles, was the subject which held an audience in closest attention last evening at the First Unitarian Church, while Swami Vive Kananda expounded the Hindoo faith. It was an audience which included thoughtful women and men, for the lecturer had been invited by the "Peripatetics," and among the friends who shared the privilege with them were ministers of varied denominations, as well as students and scholars. Vive Kananda is a Brahmin priest, and he occupied the platform in his native garb, with caftan on head, orange colored coat confined at the waist with a red sash, and red nether garments.

He presented his faith in all sincerity, speaking slowly and clearly, convincing his hearers by quietness of speech rather than by rapid action. His words were carefully weighed, and each carried its meaning direct. He offered the simplest truths of the Hindoo religion, and while he said nothing harsh about Christianity, he touched upon it in such a manner as to place the faith of Brahma before all. The all-pervading thought and leading principle of the Hindoo religion is the inherent divinity of the soul; the soul is perfect, and religion is the manifestation of divinity already existing in man. The present is merely a line of demarkation between the past and future, and of the two tendencies in man, if the good preponderates he will move to a higher sphere, if the evil has power, he degenerates. These two

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are continually at work within him; what elevates him is virtue, that which degenerates is evil.

Kananda will speak at the First Unitarian Church tomorrow morning.

It should perhaps be mentioned here that while Swamiji "had been invited by the 'Peripatetics,'" he nevertheless might at this time have been engaged by a lecture bureau; for it is a function of lecture bureaus to arrange precisely such engagements. On the other hand, he may still have been on his own. The next Minneapolis report appeared on the front page of the *Minneapolis Journal* of November 27:

AN ORIENTAL VIEW

Livami Vivekananda Addresses a Minneapolis Audience.

Mercenaries in Religion

In this Way He Characterizes the Western Nations—He Tells About the Religions of India.

The Unitarian church was crowded yesterday morning by an audience anxious to learn something of eastern religious thought as outlined by Swami Vivekananda, a Brahmin priest, who was prominent in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago last summer. The distinguished representative of the Brahmin faith was brought to Minneapolis by the Peripatetic Club, and he addressed that body last Friday evening. He was induced to remain until this week, in order that he might deliver the address yesterday.

Vivekanandi is a typical Uindeu, dark-skinned, well rounded features, and a flashing eye that gives evidence of a quick intellect. He appeared in his picturesque native dress. He occupied the platform with Dr. H. M. Simmons, the pastor, the opening prayer was sung, Vivekanandai following the lines closely, and then Dr. Simmons read from Paul's lesson on faith, hope and charity, and "the greatest of these is charity," supplementing that reading by a selec-

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tion from the Brahmin scripture which teaches the same lesson, and also a selection from the Moslem faith, and poems from the Hindu literature, all of which are in harmony with Paul's utterances.

After a second hymn Swami Vivekandi was introduced. He stepped to the edge of the platform and at once had his audience interested by the recital of a Hindu story. He said in excellent English:

"I will tell you a story of five blind men. There was a procession in a village in India, and all the people turned out to see the procession, and specially the gaily caparisoned elephant. The people were delighted, and as the five blind men could not see, they determined to touch the elephant that they might acquaint themselves with its form. They were given the privilege, and after the procession had passed, they returned home together with the people, and they began to talk about the elephant. 'It was just like a wall,' said one. 'No it wasn't,' said another, 'it was like a piece of rope.' 'You are mistaken,' said a third, 'I felt him and it was just like a serpent.' The discussion grew excited and the fourth declared the elephant was like a pillow. The argument soon broke into more angry expressions and the five blind men took to fighting. Along came a man with two eyes, and he says, 'My friends, what is the matter?' The disputation was explained, whereupon the new comer said, 'Men, you are all right: the trouble is you touched the elephant at different points. The wall was the side, the rope was the tail, the serpent was the trunk and the toes were the pillow. Stop your quarreling; you are all right, only you have been viewing the elephant from different standpoints."

Religion, he said, had become involved in such a quarrel. The people of the West thought they had the only religion of God, and the people of the East held the same prejudice. Both were wrong; God was in every religion.

There were many bright criticisms on Western thought. The Christians were characterized as having a "shop-keeping religion." They were always begging of God—"Oh, God, give me this and give me that; Oh, God, do this and do that." The Hindu couldn't understand this. He thought it wrong to be begging of God. Instead of begging, the

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religious man should give. The Hindu believed in giving to God, to his fellows, instead of asking God to give to them. He had observed that the people of the West, very many of them, thought a great deal of God, so long as they got along all right, but when reverse came, then God was forgotten: not so with the Hindu, who had come to look upon God as a being of love. The Hindu faith recognized the motherhood of God as well as the fatherhood, because the former was a better fulfillment of the idea of love. The Western Christian would work all the week for the dollar, and when he succeeded he would pray, "Oh, God, we thank thee for giving us this benefit," and then he would put all the money into his pocket; the Hindu would make the money and then give it to God by helping the poor and the less fortunate. And so comparisons were made between the ideas of the West and the ideas of the East. In speaking of God, Vivekanandi said in substance: "You people of the West think you have God. What is it to have God? If you have Him, why is it that so much criminality exists, that nine out of ten people are hypocrites? Hypocrisy cannot exist where God is. You have your palaces for the worship of God, and you attend them in part for a time once a week, but how few go to worship God. It is the fashion in the West to attend church, and many of you attend for no other reason. Have you then, you people of the West, any right to lay exclusive claim to the possession of God?"

Here the speaker was interrupted by spontaneous applause. He proceeded: "We of the Hindu faith believe in worshipping God for love's sake, not for what he gives us, but because God is love, and no nation, no people, no religion has God until it is willing to worship Him for love's sake. You of the West are practical in business, practical in great inventions, but we of the East are practical in religion. You make commerce your business; we make religion our business. If you will come to India and talk with the workman in the fields, you will find he has no opinion on politics. He knows nothing of politics. But you talk to him of religion, and the humblest knows about monotheism, deism and all the isms of religion. You ask:

" 'What government do you live under?' and he will

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reply: 'I don't know. I pay my taxes, and that's all I know about it.' I have talked with your laborers, your farmers, and I find that in politics they are all posted. They are either Democrat or Republican, and they know whether they prefer free silver or a gold standard. But you talk to them of religion; they are like the Indian farmer, they don't know, they attend such a church, but they don't know what it believes; they just pay their pew rent, and that's all they know about it—or God."

The superstitions of India were admitted, "but what nation doesn't have them?" he asked. In summing up, he held that the nations had been looking at God as a monopoly. All nations had God, and any impulse for good was God. The western people, as well as the eastern people, must learn to "want God," and this "want" was compared to the man under water, struggling for air; he wanted it, he couldn't live without it. When the people of the West "wanted" God in that manner then they would be welcome in India, because the missionaries would then come to them with God, not with the idea that India knows not God, but with love in their hearts and not dogma.

From Minneapolis, without even a day's rest, Swamiji traveled to Des Moines, Iowa—a distance of well over 250 miles—and gave an informal talk on the afternoon of November 27 and a formal lecture that evening. This lecture had been announced somewhat breathlessly by the *Des Moines News* as follows:

> The lecture event of the season will take place to-night at the Central Church of Christ when the Hindoo Monk will deliver his lecture on "The Hindoo Religion." No thinker can afford to miss it.

On November 28, this same paper ran three items regarding Swamiji, one of which covered the informal talk and reception of the afternoon of the 27th. This I shall quote first:

> On Monday afternoon, a small company were invited to the home of Dr. and Mrs. H. O. Breeden on Woodland Avenue, to meet the Hindoo monk, Swami Vivekananda,

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whose brilliant intellect made him one of the prime favorites of the parliament of religions, and whose lectures in Des Moines may be said to be of the era-making type. The distinguished oriental first gave an informal talk, in costume, on the manners and customs of India, and afterwards submitted to a running fire of questions from the guests, his witty and often sarcastic retorts proving highly entertaining.

The report of the evening's lecture was given on the same page as the above. Although in spots, as will be seen, the reporter woefully failed to follow Swamiji's argument regarding conversion, he captured enough of it to enable the reader who is familiar with Swamiji's thought to comprehend his meaning. It is apparent that this was an exceptional lecture, embodying ideas which Swamiji did not often express in quite this same way:

Swami Vivekananda, the talented scholar from the far-off India, spoke at the Central church last night. He was a representative of his country and creed at the recent parliament of religions assembled in Chicago during the world's fair. Rev. H. O. Breeden introduced the speaker to the audience. He arose and after bowing to his audience, commenced his lecture, the subject of which was "Hindoo Religion." His lecture was not confined to any line of thought but consisted more of some of his own philosophical views relative to his religion and others. He holds that one must embrace all the religions to become the perfect Christian. What is not found in one religion is supplied by another. They are all right and necessary for the true Christian. When you send a missionary to our country he becomes a Hindoo Christian and I a Christian Hindoo. I have often been asked in this country if I am going to try to convert the people here. I take this for an insult. I do not believe in this idea of conversion. To-day we have a sinful man ; tomorrow according to your idea he is converted and by and by attains unto holiness. Whence comes this change? How do you explain it? The man has not a new soul for the soul must die. You say he is changed by God. God is perfect, all powerful and is purity itself. Then after this man is converted he is that same God minus the purity

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he gave that man to become holy. There is in our country two words which have an altogether different meaning than they do in this country. They are "religion" and "sect." We hold that religion embraces all religions. We tolerate everything but intoleration. Then there is that word "sect." Here it embraces those sweet people who wrap themselves up in their mantle of charity and say, "We are right; you are wrong." It reminds me of the story of the two frogs. A frog was born in a well and lived its whole life in that well. One day a frog from the sea fell in that well and they commenced to talk about the sea. The frog whose home was in the well asked his visitor how large the sea was, but was unable to get an intelligent answer. Then the at home frog jumped from one corner of the well to another and asked his visitor if the sea was that large. He said yes. The frog jumped again and said, "Is the sea that large?" and receiving an affirmative reply, he said to himself, "This frog must be a liar; I will put him out of my well." That is the way with these sects. They seek to eject and trample those who do not believe as they do.

Swamiji's next lecture in Des Moines was announced in this same paper, the *Des Moines News* of November 28:

"Reincarnation" will be the subject of Swami Vivekananda's lecture at the Central Christian church tonight. Those who heard the gifted Hindu monk last night will be glad of a second opportunity and those who did not are to be congratulated on the fact that they can still hear him. Do not fail to go.

Regrettably, no account is given in the Des Moines papers of this lecture on reincarnation. But on November 29 there is a short editorial in the *Des Moines Daily News* which shows that it was favorably received:

Dr. Breeden has conferred a real intellectual benefit upon this community by giving it an opportunity to hear the representatives of the Greek and Hindu religions discourse upon their favorite themes. There is a good deal of

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philistinism in America, and the west, which feels less of the influence of our foreign relations than is perceptible at the seaboard, is peculiarly liable to become a little narrow and intolerant in its excessive Americanism. The archbishop of Zante and the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, have shown thinking people in Des Moines how possible it is to honestly view the problems of life from a point of view different from that of a busy, practical American.

Although the Archbishop of Zante, a delegate to the Parliament, is mentioned in connection with Swamiji, it is apparent that he visited Des Moines at an earlier date. Unlike Swamiji's lectures in Evanston which, as the reader will remember, were given in conjunction with Dr. Carl von Bergen, those in Des Moines were delivered alone.

During the short time Swamiji stayed in Des Moines he apparently electrified the city. The following item, a portion of which has been quoted in "The Life," is from the *Iowa State Register* (date unknown):

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, spoke three times in Des Moines. During his stay in the city, which was happily prolonged by the cancellation of engagements farther west, Vivekananda met many of the best people in the city, who found their time well spent discussing religious and metaphysical questions with him. But it was woe to the man who undertook to combat the monk on his own ground, and that was where they all tried it who tried it at all. His replies came like flashes of lightning, and the venturesome questioner was sure to be impaled on the Indian's shining intellectual lance. The workings of his mind, so subtle and so brilliant, so well stored and so well trained, sometimes dazzled his hearers, but it was always a most interesting study. He said nothing unkind, for his nature would not permit that. Those who came to know him best found him the most gentle and lovable of men, so honest, frank, and unpretending, always grateful for the many kindnesses that were shown him. Vivekananda and his cause found a place in the hearts of all true Christians.

Unfortunately we now lose all trace of Swamiji until late in January 1894, and a period of almost two months remains in total

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darkness. Although during this time he must have been extremely active, lecturing here and there in large and small cities, thus far all attempts to unearth information regarding his whereabouts have been in vain. But the search continues and hope is by no means given up.

II

At this point, I think it might be advisable to give the reader a brief picture of the Middle West in 1893, showing the kind of mentality with which Swamiji came in contact, the kind of people he met and what, on the whole, he was up against, for I believe that at least a general picture of the American scene in the eighteen-nineties is necessary to a true understanding of his lecture tour.

The nineties were strange and confused years. On the one hand, Americans looked backward into a more or less orderly century in which they had been robustly confident that they were headed toward a state of social perfection and that their nation was "a special object of Divine favor." On the other hand, the nineties stared aghast into a new age in which the end was not at all certain. Economic and social conditions were undergoing rapid and radical changes with which the old moral and spiritual values could not cope. These values, moreover, were being attacked from within by the new physics and the new biology, to say nothing of Darwinism which had given a resounding blow to the doctrine of man's unique position in the universe. The optimism and self-confidence that had characterized the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had suddenly given way to doubt and confusion. Nerves were on edge and, as in all transition periods, both the resistance to change and the attempts to adjust to it contained a note of hysteria.

As the story of the Parliament of Religions has shown, there were two very definite and clear-cut religious attitudes. One was that which clung to the old order of things with the strength and ferocity of a death struggle. The denominations which held this attitude, and which were later to be characterized as "fundamentalist," refused to give way either to Darwinism or to the social conditions which called for a broader and more liberal outlook than that of the nineteenth century. They resented the higher criticism and clung with fierce tenacity to a literal and rigid interpretation of Scripture.

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They had little use for the Parliament of Religions, and of course no use at all for Swamiji.

Liberal Christianity, on the other hand, had set itself to accept and incorporate into its tenets man's new knowledge, and at the same time it attempted to socialize religion, conceiving it the duty of the church to examine such problems as the labor question, the growth of slums, the creation of huge and predatory fortunes, political corruption, and so on. It assumed a moral responsibility for man's social and economic welfare and invaded the political field to the neglect of the spiritual. Secularization was the inevitable result. But nevertheless it was the clergy of this liberal Christianity which, priding itself upon its broad-mindedness, welcomed Swamiji. It was no accident that in every city he was almost invariably invited to speak at either a Unitarian or a Congregational church.

It has been said by some that the Transcendentalist movement, which took place earlier in the nineteenth century, had prepared the American mind for Swamiji's teachings. In a sense this is true, for the eyes of many had been opened to the life of the spirit by the writings of Emerson, Thoreau and even Bronson Alcott. Yet it is a fact that by the seventies those eyes had closed again. Transcendentalism had lost ground. It was no longer in tune with a generation that was becoming increasingly materialistic and which looked for a solution to its problems in a more down-to-earth and scientific philosophy. The vanguard of religious thought strove to come to terms with the findings of science, and the emphasis was now upon social reform in accordance with the laws of nature rather than those of spirit. It is true that such religions as Christian Science and New Thought were spreading rapidly, but by and large these religions emphasized man's material rather than spiritual welfare. Only in so far as they asserted that man's problems can be solved through regeneration of the spirit were they in sympathy with the teachings of Swamiji. But even so theirs was a small voice scarcely heard; it was drowned out by the most "respectable" liberal thought of the age, which insisted, as we have seen, that a change in human nature could be brought about only by first transforming the social environment.

While socialized Christianity, whose leaders and adherents were to be found for the most part on the East Coast, fought for all manner of economic and social reforms, the "fundamentalists," who predominated in the Middle West and South, busied themselves with

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frenzied attacks upon intemperance and vice. The "churchwomen" whom Swamiji mentioned during an interview in India no doubt belonged to this breed of reformer. Of them he said:

"These 'churchwomen' are awful fanatics. They are under the thumb of the priests there. Between them and the priests they make hell of earth and make a mess of religion. With the exception of these, the Americans are a very good people."

These "churchwomen" were legion. Shrill and aggressively moral, they held up a distorted picture of what was at the time extolled as "pure and enlightened womanhood." They formed innumerable committees and besieged and terrorized newspaper editors in their self-righteous crusades, sniffing out vice in every corner and finding it even where it did not exist.

A book which depicts this period speaks of this type of woman as "a terror to editors, the hope of missionary societies and the prey of lecturers. . . . Her performances were listlessly sanctioned by men whose covert emotionalism she openly and more courageously expressed in an instinctive envy of all that was free, cool or unhaltered in life, in art and affairs. She was an emblem, a grotesque shape in hot black silk, screaming at naked children in a clear river, with her companionable ministers and reformers at heel."

These "Titanesses," who for the most part inhabited the smaller cities and towns of the Middle West, were not content simply to seek out the depravity, real and imagined, of the large cities, but found a made-to-order outlet in the monstrous tales of "heathen" practices which for decades had been fed to them by the missionaries. There was something psychopathic about these women who turned a stiff, disapproving back upon the real issues of the day and clung to an unphilosophical form of rigid Christianity which had nothing to do with the actual world in which they lived and thrived. Hypocrisy was rampant, and it is little wonder that Swamiji's reproof became more and more forceful as he toured the Middle West.

It is hard today to grasp the enormity of missionary propaganda that held hypnotic sway over the American mind during the last half of the nineteenth century; for ignorant and fanciful as we may still be in regard to Hinduism, the ground has certainly been cleared of the more absurd and monstrous notions that flourished a half century ago. The following hymn is typical of the kind of thing that confronted Swamiji. It comes from a book entitled: "Songs for the

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(THE HEATHEN MOTHER.)

No. 56. *Saugor Island.*

This island is inhabited only by wild beasts. Here thousands of Hindu mothers have thrown their children into the Gangas to be devoured by alligators.

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No. 53. *A man burning his wife alive.*

No. 36. *An Infant Victim of Superstition.*

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Little Ones at Home," written by a Christian missionary in India for the edification of the young:

See that heathen mother stand
Where the sacred current flows;
With her own maternal hand
Mid the waves her babe she throws.

Hark! I hear the piteous scream;
Frightful monsters seize their prey,
Or the dark and bloody stream
Bears the struggling child away.

Fainter now, and fainter still,
Breaks the cry upon the ear;
But the mother's heart is steel
She unmoved that cry can hear.

Send, oh send the Bible there,
Let its precepts reach the heart;
She may then her children spare—
Act the tender mother's part.

In 1893 such verses, earnestly piped by "the little ones at home," were no laughing matter. Every level of society had been bombarded with falsehoods and slander regarding India. When Swamiji later said that all the mud on the bottom of the Indian Ocean could not balance the filth that had been thrown at his motherland, he was not exaggerating. I have before me on my desk a book entitled "India and Its Inhabitants." It was first published in 1858 and comprises 335 pages of lectures delivered throughout America by a Mr. Caleb Wright, M.A., (no relation of Prof. John Henry Wright). On the title page is the information that "The Author Visited India and Travelled Extensively There, For the Express Purpose of Collecting The Information Contained in This Volume"—information, I might add, which was predominantly false, calumnious and sensational. This book, profusely illustrated with line drawings and replete with moral reflections on the order of "Send, oh send the Bible there," had a phenomenal success among the intelligentsia. A preface cites testimonials from the presidents of twenty American colleges who gave unstinting praise to the lectures of Caleb Wright. A comparison of two editions of the book shows that within a space of two years over 36,000 copies were printed.

And this was but one book among many of its kind. For decades

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before Swamiji came to America, missionary calumny against India had saturated the public mind and provided it with thrills of righteous horror. The atmosphere in the early nineties was still thick with ignorance and bigotry, poisonous to both America and India, and it was inevitable that Swamiji, confronted by so strongly entrenched and so pernicious an enemy to his motherland, would make every effort to combat it.

One indication that he gave serious thought to the missionary propaganda against India is the fact, recently come to light, that a few months after the Parliament he took the trouble to copy out in longhand on three sheets of letter paper a passage which portrayed the true missionary situation in India. A curious coincidence is connected with these pages, and before giving their contents I should like to digress a little to tell of it. It was through the kindness of Swami Vishwananda, head of the Vedanta center in Chicago, that these three pages, covered with Swamiji's handwriting in pencil, came into the hands of Swami Ashokananda. Welcome as they were, they presented a mystery, for there was no indication from what source Swamiji had quoted, if he had quoted at all. The only clue was a single notation in his hand on the back of the third sheet, which read: "Louis Rousselet," an unknown name which could mean anything or nothing. But while Swami Ashokananda was puzzling over the import of Swamiji's writing, the San Francisco Vedanta Society received a packet of secondhand books that had been bought on sale, sight unseen. Among them was a large illustrated travel book on India, long out of print—by Louis Rousselet! On page 533 was the passage in question. For the reader's information, the title of this book is "India and Its Native Princes—Travels in Central India and in the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal." It is a translation of the French "L'Inde des Rajahs" and was first published by Scribner, Armstrong and Co. in 1876. Later it ran into other editions. The passage which struck Swamiji and which, no doubt, was the first true account of India he had read for a long time, is given here precisely as he copied it:

> Is there a people in the world more tolerant than this good gentle Hindoo people, who have been so often described to us as cunning, cruel and even bloodthirsty? Compare them for an instant with the Mussulmans, or even with ourselves, in spite of our reputation for civilization and tolerance. Only let a Chinese or an Indian come and walk in our streets during

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a religious festival or ceremony, and will not the crowd exhibit the most hostile feelings towards him if his bearing should not be in conformity with the customs of the country? Will his ignorance excuse him? I doubt it. And in what country could such a spectacle be witnessed as that which met my eyes that day in this square of Benares? There, at ten paces from all that the Hindoo holds to be most sacred in religion, between the Source of Wisdom and the idol of Siva a Protestant missionary has taken his stand beneath a tree. Mounted on a chair, he was preaching in the Hindostani language, on the Christian religion and the errors of paganism. I heard his shrill voice, issuing from the depths of a formidable shirt-collar, eject these words at the crowd, which respectfully and attentively surrounded him—"You are idolaters! That block of stone which you worship has been taken from a quarry, it is no better than the stone of my house."

The reproaches called forth no murmur; the missionary was listened to immovably, but his dissertation was attended to, for every now and then one of the audience would put a question, to which the brave apostle replied as best he could. Perhaps we should be disposed to admire the courage of the missionary if the well-known toleration of the Hindoos did not defraud him of all his merit; and it is this tolerance that most disheartens the missionary one of whom said to me, "Our labours are in vain; you can never convert a man who has sufficient conviction in his own religion to listen, without moving a muscle, to all the attacks you can make against it."

This passage must have seemed like a refreshing oasis of sanity to Swamiji, and he copied it out for the benefit of friends. On the back of the second page of his transcription there is the following notation in an unknown hand:

Written by Swami the 12th [really the 11th] of February —after dining with Mr. and Mrs. Woodhead and Carl Von Bergen—Before leaving us in the afternoon, he gave us one of his most wonderful efforts on spiritual things, "I say there is but one remedy for one too anxious for the future—To go down on his knees."—Mr. and Mrs. Norton came home with

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the girls in the evening. Swami left for Detroit Monday Feb. 13 [12]—1894.

III

The Parliament of Religions can perhaps be likened to a huge boulder dropped into the middle of a shallow pond, causing upheaval on all sides. Even without Swamiji the Parliament would have created no little confusion, for it was a shock to people to discover that Oriental priests were not on a level with grotesquely masked medicine men; but *with* Swamiji the effect was galvanizing and permanent. Something had happened in America that could never be talked away, although many an effort was made to do just that. From the very brief and general survey of the religious climate of America during the last decade of the nineteenth century which has been given above the reader may be able to deduce the various reactions to the Parliament. But the repercussions were even more pronounced than one might have expected, and I know of no better way to study them than through the contemporaneous newspapers of a typical American city, for there one can see the situation at first hand.

In "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" it is said: "In his tours the Swami visited all the larger cities of the Eastern and Midwestern States," and the list of these cities includes St. Louis, Missouri. But Swamiji did not go there. A thorough search has been made of the St. Louis newspapers of 1893 and 1894, and no mention has been found of his lectures. This is fairly conclusive evidence that St. Louis was not included in his itinerary. For wherever Swamiji went he made news, and it is unthinkable that the reporters of St. Louis would have failed at least to mention his presence. One explanation of this lies in the fact that, according to contemporary reports, St. Louis was for unknown reasons "a wretchedly poor lecture town," and was no doubt shunned by lecture bureaus. But although Swamiji did not lecture there, the city was not exempt from repercussions of the Parliament, and I think it will serve very well as our typical "case."

The *St. Louis Republic* ran a column called "Sunday Thoughts on Morals and Manners." It was written by an anonymous clergyman and is perhaps one of the finest examples that one could come upon of the religious mentality of the Midwest.

On September 10, the eve of the opening of the Parliament, all

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was serene. The clergyman with admirable and placid broad-mindedness invoked the blessings of God upon the Congress which was to open the next day:

> There ought to come out of the parliament an authoritative statement of the creeds of the world, brought down to date, and revised into as close harmony with the age as possible—of rare interest and importance to all students of comparative religion. Thus far we have been obliged to consult ancient authorities, or to grope after rare and sometimes inaccessible books, or else take the word of unfriendly critics, regarding the tenets of faiths beyond the Christian pale. It will be a gain worth the whole cost of the parliament to get from these faiths themselves their *raison d'etre*. . . . Not that the faiths represented will fraternize. Far from it. They are essentially antagonistic and exclusive. Each claims all, or will accept nothing. But it is something to win the consent of their representatives to confer at all, and to make on a common platform an *exposé* of faith and conduct.

Our clergyman immediately followed these reflections with statistical proof, for the benefit of "those who imagine that Christianity is declining," that, on the contrary, it was growing by leaps and bounds and that "the Electric Age, on whose threshold we stand, will bring in the greater part of the whole human race [to the Christian roster]."

By the following Sunday this quiet and reasonable clergyman had become transformed. The generosity and calm with which he had settled down to hear what the religions beyond the Christian pale had to say for themselves were no longer anywhere in evidence. He was raging mad. He wrote:

> The reports of the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions, which assembled in Chicago last Monday, and is now in session, show, as might have been expected, an insistence upon the part of all the speakers that each one is eternally and exclusively right. This is especially true of the representatives of the various Oriental faiths. Claims are easily made —often out of wind! When claims conflict, the courts test

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them. Christ lays down a practical rule—"By their fruits ye shall know them!" What are the fruits of the Oriental faith?

Take India. Polytheism prevails in the grossest forms. There are not less than 330,000,000 deities—enough to give each man, woman and child a god of his or her own. These are worshiped by impure rites, and exact on the part of their devotees self-torture, including in the case of widows burial or burning alive. The Hindoo is taught that these images are divine, and the heaviest judgments are denounced [pronounced] against him if he dares to suspect that they are nothing else than the elements which compose them. Cast is universal. Tyranny is immemorial. Woman is degraded. Polygamy abounds. Infanticide is common. Lying and theft are habitual. There is a want of tenderness toward and care for the sick, the poor and the dying. Ignorance and slavery and immorality compose the real trinity of Hindustan. These facts are undeniable.

"Sunday Thoughts" went on to give a brief outline of the faiths of Shintoism and Mohammedanism, which latter "came out of the distempered brain of the epileptic Mohammed." This was the minister who had a week before serenely welcomed the opportunity the Parliament offered for the study of comparative religion. This indeed was the Middle West in its true colors, the thin veneer of liberality thrown to the winds.

The following week, as the Parliament drew to a close, our clergyman made it clear, lest anyone be misled, that nothing at all had been learned from the sessions other than what he had predicted in the beginning:

Perhaps the chief value [of the Parliament] will be found in the demonstration given of the universality of the religious instinct. . . . There is a difference as abysmal as the space that divides heaven and earth between the ethics of Confucius, the dreamy mysticism of Buddha, the mist and moonshine of Theosophy, the dizzy polytheism of Brahmanism, the ancestor-worship of Shinto and the Christian system. All that there is of sweet and pure and good in the other faiths Christianity contains in a higher development, with a super-added wealth

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of distinctive tenets all its own. . . . We inscribe over it the old legend that was traced on the pillars of Hercules—*Ne plus ultra.*

Having settled this point, he deals another blow at Mohammedanism and then sits back to pursue the unruffled and platitudinous tone of his column.

But not for long. The Parliament continued to rankle within him. On October 15, a large part of "Sunday Thoughts" was devoted to a comparison of the Christian ideal of womanhood with that of "the semi-civilized peoples of the Orient." He wrote:

> The ethnic religions of China, India and Japan and the teachings of Islam are alike in making woman guilty of her sex and in giving her importance solely as an annex to man. . . . She must be "protected," and to make and keep her willing to be "protected" she is dwarfed in mind, stunted in soul and prostituted to mere physical uses.

There is a great deal more in this same vein. The fact was that if anyone wanted to stir up hostility against a culture or a religion he could not do better than suggest, or boldly state, that its treatment of women was not all that it should be. Never had American women been more conscious of themselves as *women* than in the nineties. One woman writer, an exception among them, summed up the situation with humor and objectivity. In an article entitled "Women's Excitement Over 'Woman,' " which was published in the *Forum* of September 1893, she writes:

> Woman is a species of high and heroic and emancipated womanhood, as serviceable to the sex for the purposes of rhetorical and impassioned address, as that gentle and vapid species, "the Fair Sex," is to men for after-dinner gallantry. She is wise with the wisdom of clubs and conventions and strong in her inheritance of instincts. There is nothing of which she is not sure, except that man was designed by nature to be her helper; and there is nothing which she will not do for the good of her own species, except do nothing. . . . She gets columns, nay pages, of the newspapers written by Her for Her. . . . The magazines bow to the pressure of Her personality,

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and review Her profoundly in the light of history and of every possible and impossible modern circumstance.

All the missionaries needed to do in the nineties was to elaborate on the plight of the Hindu widow and they had the full force of outraged American womanhood ranged beside them. It was a force to be reckoned with and one which few editors dared oppose. It is little wonder that Swamiji so often spoke of the Hindu ideal of womanhood as he toured America, for this aspect of Indian culture had been dragged as far down as possible into the mud and there exploited for all it was worth.

In "Sunday Thoughts" of October 15 our clergyman made use of another current device—one which served many of his kind in getting around the inconvenient fact of the intellectual brilliance and moral grandeur displayed at the Parliament by the Oriental delegates. He quotes the following item taken from a Chicago newspaper, the *Interior*: " . . . It is especially noticeable that most of the men who eulogized alien faiths were those who personally owed their intellectual quickening and their morals to contact with Christianity."

But how was one to deal with Swamiji in this respect? The author of "Sunday Thoughts" maintained a judicious silence on the subject, and one can only imagine the intensity of his indignation when on October 30, 1893, Prince Wolkonsky, the Russian delegate to the Parliament who, as readers will remember, became a friend of Swamiji, spoke in St. Louis on his impressions of America. In the course of his talk which appeared in the *St. Louis Republic* of October 31, Wolkonsky said with his customary frankness:

> Don't ask every man: "To what church do you belong?" It is of no importance to you, but it is to him. The question is: Is he a man? Judge him by what he is. The great value of the religious congress was that these people learned to know a man. There was one man there the embodiment of spirituality! I do not know what church he belonged to. He thinks and acts and speaks as a Christian. But you say he is not a Christian. So much the better. You say he is a Buddhist. Better still. If you belong to a higher religion you should try to be better still than he.

There can be no doubt that Wolkonsky was referring to Swamiji,

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whom many had taken to be a Buddhist and over whom Chicago had gone wild.

It wasn't until February 18 that our clergyman had his answer ready. In one short paragraph he neatly disposed of Wolkonsky and Swamiji once and for all. It was the perfect retort. One can almost see him standing aside to watch the effect of it:

> One of the picturesque figures at the Chicago Parliament of Religions was a Hindoo monk named Vive Kananda. He impressed his hearers as being a man of remarkable intelligence and vivacity. Many thought highly of a religion that could produce such a representative. Now it transpires that he is a graduate of Harvard University. That is where all his Nineteenth Century notions came from. He is indebted to Asia only for his color and his costume.

The Christian clergy could now draw a deep breath. "Sunday Thoughts on Morals and Manners," however, does not represent the whole of religious thought in the Middle West. In their reaction to the Parliament of Religions not all clergymen resorted to a tempest of name-calling. The liberal section of the Christian church, which had already faced the fact that the Christian doctrine needed re-examining if it was to meet the requirements of the times, took a more serious and honest view of the situation. The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, a far more liberal paper than the *Republic*, reflected this attitude in an article of October 2, which covered the sermons given on the Sunday following the close of the Parliament. Its headline reads: "Religious Provincialism," and subtitles: "It Has Received Its Death Blow in America, Says Dr. Snyder. The Parliament of Religions Discussed in Many Pulpits—Christianity Must Prove Its Superiority at the Bar of Public Intelligence."

But whatever were the reactions to the Parliament of Religions, there can be no doubt that it had caused a ferment in the pulpits of America. Ministers ranted, reasoned and made resolutions regarding the necessity for self-examination. The storm extended as far as China, where, according to the *St. Louis Republic* of February 18, 1894, a religious Parliament, composed of the various missionary elements at work there, was held for "Mutual encouragement in the one great mission of Christian enlightenment."

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But repercussions of this sort were not all: something else happened. A nation-wide religious revival of immense proportions took place. People suddenly began to rush to the churches in overwhelming numbers. According to the *St. Louis Republic* of January 21, 1894:

> Revivals are being held everywhere, and the accessions to the church are gratifying results that prove the stability of the great truths taught by the prophets of old, and explained by Christ himself. . . . In New York, Boston, Philadelphia and even in San Francisco, the work is being carried on by religious workers with unusual success, and the new year promises to be as productive of good results as the years of 1857-58, when failure after failure created distrust in the permanence of things of earth. . . . The present generation watching the mighty strides of progress and struggling in the vortex of business cares, has been prone to adopt the negative creed of the Pantheist or to answer in the easy manner of the Agnostic; but now, in the time of trouble, the soul instinctively seeks its Maker and a tide of religious sentiment is rushing with an irresistible current, cleansing sinful lives and carrying away the barriers of sin. . . . Evangelists, zealous workers, are converting sinners everywhere and the light of gospel, with incomparable radiance, is flooding the land.

On January 29, 1894, the *St. Louis Republic* again covered the religious revival in a front page dispatch from New York, headlined: "A Religious Wave Now Sweeping Over New York and Brooklyn." The article reads in part:

> Church workers in New York think that a tidal wave of religion has been fairly launched in the United States and is fairly settling over New York and Brooklyn. Revival meetings are being held in more than half of the churches in Brooklyn, and ministers in New York are joining the crusade. . . . Now from all parts of the country the news is coming of a religious awakening, promising to surpass in magnitude that one of the past. . . . Ministers from every portion of the City of Churches reported renewed interest; there seemed to be remarkable religious feeling. At last evangelists were engaged. Meetings have been held daily in half a dozen places. Hundreds and

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hundreds have risen for prayers, and thousands have promised to lead a better life. Last Sunday the new acquisitions to the membership of the churches of the city [Brooklyn] aggregated nearly 500. . . . Last week the Central Committee [a body made up of 17 clergymen of all denominations] decided that the movement had assumed such proportions that the body could not adequately take care of it, so the responsibility was delegated to the rightful authorities and notice was given that every pastor in the city must attend to those nearest his own doors. For three weeks meetings have been held in 13 churches every evening. During the day two meetings have been kept up. This week more churches will be opened every night and the day meetings will be continued. The attendance at all of these meetings has been phenomenal. Every church is crowded. People willingly stand for hours. "After meetings" draw more people than ever. They seem loath to leave the church. The revivals of to-day are conducted very differently from those of 10 years ago. The old way was to frighten sinners with terrible stories of an everlasting hell until they were driven, from sheer sense of fear, into the inquiry room, where "experience meetings" were depended on to do the rest. All is now changed. The all-powerful love of Jesus Christ is the appeal. God's love and forgiveness the theme.

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* also covered the religious revival, devoting, on February 4, 1894, more than a full page to a statistical report of conversions in five states. The article consists almost solely of the names of the churches in 177 counties and the number of people who had recently joined them. I cannot imagine anyone sitting down to read this, and fortunately the essence of the whole story is told in the following headlines: "THE CHRISTIAN HARVEST. Astonishing Results of Religious Revivals in the West. Nearly Fifty-Four Thousand Conversions Since Last September. Churches Strengthened by Forty-Nine Thousand New Members. A Religious Awakening Almost Unprecedented in Extent and Power. Special Reports from Globe-Democrat Correspondents, Covering One Hundred and Seventy-Seven Counties in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Texas and Arkansas." I hope the reader will note that the figures given pertain to five states only, and that he will also note that the

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revival started in September, 1893—the month of the Parliament of Religions.

It is always a problem for historians and psychologists to explain what incites such phenomena as the sudden conversion of thousands upon thousands of people. Perhaps many forces are at work. In this particular case one can clearly see at least three. First, the obvious one: there was at the time a financial depression. Second: the Christian clergy had been pressed by the unexpected outcome of the Parliament to stir up Christian fervor. And third, and I believe most important: there suddenly appeared in America one who embodied a spiritual power of the very highest order.

The most remarkable thing about this revival of 1893 was the unmistakable atmosphere of joy which pervaded it and which distinguished it from revivals of earlier times. A new note had been struck in the exhortations of the ministers. The clergy no longer hammered, as they had done in previous revivals, upon the imminence of hell-fire and eternal damnation, terrorizing their parishioners into a hysterical surrender. Now the emphasis was upon God's infinite mercy, the glories of heaven. People were not hounded to church; they poured in and sang their hymns with an irrepressible elation.

A reporter in the *St. Louis Republic* remarked upon this change of attitude from that of the old days in a lengthy article entitled "In The Olden Time." The article concludes with the following paragraph:

> [The old time exhorter's] spirit is the distilled essence of vinegar mixed with the extracts of wormwood and gall and his dolorous voice sounds the funeral knell of his parishioners' hopes for happiness on earth. Happily, this class of exhorters is dying off rapidly and the penetrating rays of the true conception of God's mercy are penetrating the fastnesses and jungles in which the somber exhorter had so long held forth.

But aside from the change in the voice from the pulpit, there was a spontaneity in the response which took even the clergymen by storm and which makes it difficult not to believe that the advent of so great a prophet as Swamiji had stirred the spiritual forces latent in America and awakened such a hunger for spiritual sustenance that men and women everywhere eagerly rushed to satisfy it, flocking in

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droves to the religion closest to them, in whose tradition they had been reared and with whose doctrines and forms they were familiar.

Swamiji's fame, as we know, had spread like wildfire through America both during and after the Parliament of Religions. Swami Abhedananda, who knew at first hand the American reaction to him, said in a lecture delivered on March 8, 1903, before the Vedanta Society of New York: "During the last decade there have been few pulpits in the United States which have not held preachers who have had something to say either for or against the teachings of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda." Swamiji's message was spread far and wide. In one guise or another it became known to the people, and it cannot but be supposed that a surge of genuine religious feeling came as a result of this great current of fresh thought from the East, which was given with the full vigor of a spiritual power such as the world has rarely known. Such power moves silently and invisibly but surely, working on all levels, churning the surface into a foam, as well as altering forever the deep, hidden currents of the spiritual life of a whole people. It was the latter result for which Swamiji had come, but the former was bound to take place; and when one thinks of it, it would seem more a matter for wonder if something of this sort had *not* taken place than that it had.

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CHAPTER FIVE

IN A SOUTHERN CITY

I

On Saturday, January 13, 1894, Swamiji arrived in Memphis, invited by the members of the Nineteenth Century Club, some of whom had attended the Parliament of Religions and had been deeply impressed by "the Hindu Monk." It would seem from what we so far know that many of Swamiji's engagements were made independently of the lecture bureau, negotiations being made directly between him and various clubs or individuals. For instance, the Peripatetic Club invited Swamiji to speak in Minneapolis; Dr. H. O. Breeden arranged for his lectures in Des Moines; the Nineteenth Century Club brought him to Memphis; and, as will be seen in a following chapter, the Unity Club first sponsored him in Detroit. But since Swamiji probably signed a contract with the lecture bureau in November, that agency no doubt received a large share of the proceeds from every lecture given thereafter—whether arranged under its management or not.

In Memphis Swamiji was the guest of Mr. Hu L. Brinkley, who lived in what was variously known as "Miss Moon's establishment" or the "La Salette Academy." Actually, although its name persisted in current use, the La Salette Academy was nonexistent, having been closed in 1891. Miss Virginia Moon, fondly known in Memphis as "Miss Ginny," turned the building in which the academy had been housed into a boarding-house for six or seven bachelor gentlemen. At the time of Swamiji's visit Miss Moon was around fifty and one of Memphis' most extraordinary characters. She must have delighted Swamiji with her spirit of independence, for she was an emancipated woman par excellence, who had little use for men and who toted a pearl-handled revolver in a dainty, ruffled parasol. But Miss Ginny had a heart of gold. Her main vocation was giving in charity and, with her ever-present and persuasive parasol in hand, convincing the wealthy men of Memphis that they should do likewise. History has recorded her as "a one woman community fund." It was in the large

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parlors of Miss Ginny Moon's boarding-house that Swamiji received callers, held interviews and twice lectured.

On the evening of his arrival in Memphis a reception was held for him by a Mrs. S. R. Shepherd. The next day, Sunday, January 14, he granted an interview to a local reporter. The interview was in certain respects unique, as will be seen in the following article from the *Memphis Commercial* of January 15:

SWAMI VIVE KANANDA HERE

The Hindu Monk Who Is to Lecture in This City

He Talks Entertainingly to a Reporter on Various Subjects, Among Them Suspended Animation and Other Marvels Peculiar to His Home.

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu Monk, who will lecture this afternoon at 3 o'clock before the Nineteenth Century Club, and tomorrow night at the Auditorium, arrived in Memphis Saturday, and is the guest of Hu L. Brinkley at Miss Moon's establishment, Third Street, near Poplar.

Swami Vive Kananda is in some respects the most interesting visitor Memphis has ever had. Himself a Brahmin, he sacrificed his rank and joined the order of Hindu monks called Sanyasin. He was to Americans at least perhaps the most interesting figure in the World's Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago in connection with the World's Fair. This was not alone because he came as the representative of a religion of a far away land, but because of the excellent speeches which he made during the great religious gathering.

Yesterday afternoon Swami Vive Kananda dined at Col. R. B. Snowden's [at Annesdale] where he met Bishop Thomas F. Gailor. He had only a short time returned from this visit when a *Commercial* reporter called upon him at Miss Moon's, and was accorded an interview with him in the rooms of Gen. R. F. Patterson, where he was sitting at the time.

Vive Kananda is very striking in his personality.

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Though quite dark of complexion, his intellectual forehead, large fine eyes and black hair, his easy, graceful manners and fine figure and carriage make him a very handsome man.

Asked by the reporter for his impressions of America, he said:

"I have a good impression of this country especially of the American women. I have especially remarked on the absence of poverty in America."

The conversation afterward turned to the subject of religions. Swami Vive Kananda expressed the opinion that the World's Parliament of Religions had been beneficial in that it had done much toward broadening ideas.

"What," asked the reporter, "is the generally accepted view held by those of your faith as to the fate after death of one holding the Christian religion?"

"We believe that if he is a good man he will be saved. Even an atheist, if he is a good man, we believe must be saved. That is our religion. We believe all religions are good, only those who hold them must not quarrel."

Swami Vive Kananda was questioned concerning the truthfulness of the marvelous stories of the performance of wonderful feats of conjuring, levitation, suspended animation, and the like in India. Vive Kananda said:

"We do not believe in miracles at all but that apparently strange things may be accomplished under the operation of natural laws. There is a vast amount of literature in India on these subjects, and the people there have made a study of these things.

"Thought reading and the foretelling of events are successfully practised by the Hathayogis.

"As to levitation, I have never seen anyone overcome gravitation and rise by will into the air, but I have seen many who were trying to do so. They read books published on the subject and spend years trying to accomplish the feat. Some of them in their efforts nearly starve themselves, and become so thin that if one presses his finger upon their stomachs he can actually feel the spine.

"Some of these Hathayogis live to a great age."

The subject of suspended animation was broached and the Hindu monk told the *Commercial* reporter that he him-

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self had known a man who went into a sealed cave, which was then closed up with a trap door, and remained there for many years, without food. There was a decided stir of interest among those who heard this assertion. Vive Kananda entertained not the slightest doubt of the genuineness of this case. He says that in the case of suspended animation growth is for the time arrested. He says the case of the man in India who was buried with a crop of barley raised over his grave and who was finally taken out still alive is perfectly well authenticated. He thinks the studies which enabled persons to accomplish that feat were suggested by the hibernating animals.

Vive Kananda said that he had never seen the feat which some writers have claimed has been accomplished in India, of throwing a rope into the air and the thrower climbing up the rope and disappearing out of sight in the distant heights.

A lady present when the reporter was interviewing the monk said some one had asked her if he, Vive Kananda, could perform wonderful tricks, and if he had been buried alive as a part of his installation in the Brotherhood. The answer to both questions was a positive negative. "What have those things to do with religion?" he asked. "Do they make a man purer? The satan of your Bible is powerful, but differs from God in not being pure."

Speaking of the sect of Hathayoga, Vive Kananda said there was one thing, whether a coincidence or not, connected with the initiation of their disciples, which was suggestive of the one passage in the life of Christ. They make their disciples live alone for just forty days.

Only the members and invited guests of the Nineteenth Century Club will hear Swami Vive Kananda this afternoon; tomorrow night, when he appears at the Auditorium, the public will have an opportunity to see and hear this very interesting man and no less interesting talker. Vive Kananda will likely go from here to Chicago. He does not yet know how long he will remain in America.

On the afternoon of Monday, January 15, Swamiji gave his first lecture in Memphis at the Nineteenth Century Club. What his

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subject was we do not know, but we do know from an item in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 21 that "the address of Swami Vive Kananda before the Nineteenth Century Club and the reception given after the lecture was one of the pleasant events of this eventful year in club calendar." A piano solo and a song "formed the musical program of the afternoon." How many musical programs Swamiji must have heard while on tour! Few occasions were considered complete without at least two solos, rendered, as a rule, by accomplished young women.

The following reports which cover the first three days of Swamiji's stay in Memphis and which give some idea of how his reputation had spread, appeared in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 14, 15, and 16 respectively. As will be seen, no matter how well known Swamiji became, the idea still persisted that he had been a Brahmin who became a Hindu priest or monk:

COMING WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS

Memphis this morning has a distinguished visitor in the person of Swami Vive Kananda, a Brahman monk of India, who is the guest of the Nineteenth Century Club. His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality has given this country a new idea of Hindoo civilisation. He is an interesting figure; his fine, intelligent, mobile face in its setting of yellows and his deep, musical voice prepossessing one at once in his favour. So it is not strange that he has been taken up by the literary clubs, and has lectured and preached in many American churches. He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art, the most convincing sincerity, and rising at times to a rich, inspiring eloquence. "Hinduism" will be his subject next Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock at the Auditorium.

January 15, 1894

AMUSEMENTS

"One of the giants of the platform," "a model representative of his race," "a sensation of the World's Fair parliament," "an orator by divine right." All this and

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more is true of Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu Monk, who is in the city, a guest of the Nineteenth Century Club. Several members of the club heard Vive Kananda during the recent parliament of religions, and were so charmed with his eloquence, his earnestness, his culture, that they determined to have him visit Memphis, and to this end have been in correspondence with him since the adjournment of the parliament. On tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock in the Auditorium an opportunity will be given the people of Memphis to see and hear this earnest, eloquent Brahman tell of the religions, manners, and customs of his people.

January 16, 1894

THE HINDOO MONK

The Eloquent Lecturer From the Orient Will Be Heard Tonight

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, who is to lecture at the Auditorium tonight, is one of the most eloquent men who has ever appeared on the religious or lecture platform in this country. His matchless oratory, deep penetration into things occult, his cleverness in debate, and great earnestness captured the closest attention of the world's thinking men at the World's Fair Parliament of Religion, and the admiration of thousands of people who have since heard him during his lecture tour through many of the states of the Union.

In conversation he is a most pleasant gentleman; his choice of words are the gems of the English language, and his general bearing ranks him with the most cultured people of Western etiquette and custom. As a companion he is a most charming man, and as a conversationalist he is, perhaps, not surpassed in the drawingrooms of any city in the Western World. He speaks English not only distinctly, but fluently, and his ideas, as new as sparkling, drop from his tongue in a perfectly bewildering overflow of ornamental language.

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Swami Vive Kananda, by his inherited religion or early teachings, grew up a Brahmin, but becoming converted to the Hindoo religion he sacrificed his rank and became a Hindoo priest, or as known in the country of oriental ideality, a sanyasin. He had always been a close student of the wonderful and mysterious works of nature as drawn from God's high conception, and with years spent as both a student and teacher in the higher colleges of that eastern country, he acquired a knowledge that has given him a worldwide reputation as one of the most thoughtful scholars of the age.

His wonderful first address before the members of the World's Fair Parliament stamped him at once as a leader in that great body of religious thinkers. During the session he was frequently heard in defence of his religion, and some of the most beautiful and philosophical gems that grace the English language rolled from his lips there in picturing the higher duties that man owed to man and to his Creator. He is an artist in thought, an idealist in belief and a dramatist on the platform.

Since his arrival in Memphis he has been guest of Mr. Hu L. Brinkley, where he has received calls day and evening from many in Memphis who desired to pay their respects to him. He is also an informal guest at the Tennessee Club and was a guest at the reception given by Mrs. S. R. Shepherd, Saturday evening. Col. R. B. Snowden gave a dinner at his home at Annesdale in honor of the distinguished visitor on Sunday, where he met Assistant Bishop Thomas F. Gailor, Rev. Dr. George Patterson and a number of other clergymen.

Yesterday afternoon he lectured before a large and fashionable audience composed of the members of the Nineteenth Century Club in the rooms of the club in the Randolph Building. Tonight he will be heard at the Auditorium on "Hindooism."

By the time Swamiji reached Memphis his name seems to have been established as Vive Kananda. This division of Vivekananda into a first and last name was probably an inspiration on the part of the lecture bureau. It was easier to remember this way, less liable to distortion in spelling and pronunciation and, in the jargon of

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Detroit Tribune
February 14. 1894
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of the Moon.

Vive Kananda,

Brahmin Monk of India,
in the Costume of His Order.

Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday evenings at Unitarian Church. Tickets: Single lecture, 50 cents; Course, $1. For sale at MacFarlane's and Wright & Kay's.
"Orator by Divine Right," "Giant of the Platform," "A Master of English," "Sensation of World's Parliament."

Detroit Tribune
Feb. 19. 1894.

VIVE KANANDA

EXTRA LECTURE
UNITARIAN CHURCH.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21.

SUBJECT—"LOVE." ADMISSION 50 CENTS.

The Detroit Journal. March 10. 1894

DETROIT OPERA HOUSE.
SUNDAY EVE., March 11.

KANANDA

Subject—"The Christian Missions in India."
ALL RESERVED SEATS 50c—GALLERY 25c.
Reserved Seats on Sale at Box Office.

The Detroit Tribune. March 10. 1894

AMUSEMENTS. AMUSEMENTS.

DETROIT OPERA HOUSE

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 11.

KANANDA

SUBJECT: "THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA."

Admission 50c with reserved seat—Gallery 25c. Reserved seats at Box Office

ADVERTISEMENTS OF "KANANDA"

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modern publicity agents, "better box office." In most cases, particularly in advance publicity, the "Vive" was dropped altogether and Swamiji was heralded in the papers as "Kananda" in letters an inch high.

Swamiji's lecture on Hinduism, as has been seen in the above reports, was delivered on Tuesday evening, January 16, at the Auditorium. The *Memphis Commercial* of January 17 reported upon it as follows:

PLEA FOR TOLERANCE

Swami Vive Kananda Instructs Christians on the Faith of the Hindus.

An audience of fair proportions gathered last night at the Auditorium to greet the celebrated Hindu monk, Swami Vive Kananda, in his lecture on Hinduism.

He was introduced in a brief but informing address by Judge R. J. Morgan, who gave a sketch of the development of the great Aryan race, from which development have come the Europeans and the Hindus alike, so tracing a racial kinship between the people of America and the speaker who was to address them.

The eminent Oriental was received with liberal applause, and heard with attentive interest throughout. He is a man of fine physical presence, with regular bronze features and form of fine proportions. He wore a robe of pink silk, fastened at the waist with a black sash, black trousers and about his head was gracefully draped a turban of yellow India silk. His delivery is very good, his use of English being perfect as regards choice of words and correctness of grammar and construction. The only inaccuracy of pronunciation is in the accenting of words at times upon a wrong syllable. Attentive listeners, however, probably lost few words, and their attention was well rewarded by an address full of original thought, information and broad wisdom. The address might fitly be called a plea for universal tolerance, illustrated by remarks concerning the religion of India. This spirit, he contended, the spirit of tolerance and love, is the central inspiration of all religions which are worthy,

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and this, he thinks, is the end to be secured by any form of faith.

His talk concerning Hinduism was not strictly circumstantial. His attempt was rather to give an analysis of its spirit than a story of its legends or a picture of its forms. He dwelt upon only a few of the distinctive credal or ritual features of his faith, but these he explained most clearly and perspicuously. He gave a vivid account of the mystical features of Hinduism, out of which the so often misinterpreted theory of reincarnation has grown. He explained how his religion ignored the differentiations of time, how, just as all men believe in the present and the future of the soul, so the faith of Brahma believes in its past. He made it clear, too, how his faith does not believe in "original sin," but bases all effort and aspiration on the belief of the perfectibility of humanity. Improvement and purification, he contends, must be based upon hope. The development of man is a return to an original perfection. This perfection must come through the practice of holiness and love. Here he showed how his own people have practiced these qualities, how India has been a land of refuge for the oppressed, citing the instance of the welcome given by the Hindus to the Jews when Titus sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

In a graphic way he told that the Hindus do not lay much stress upon forms. Sometimes every member of the family will differ in their adherence to sects, but all will worship God by worshiping the spirit of love which is His central attribute. The Hindus, he says, hold that there is good in all religions, that all religions are embodiments of man's inspiration for holiness, and being such, all should be respected. He illustrated this by a citation from the Vedas, in which varied religions are symbolized as the differently formed vessels with which different men came to bring water from a spring. The forms of the vessels are many, but the water of truth is what all seek to fill their vessels with. God knows all forms of faith, he thinks, and will recognize his own name no matter what it is called, or what may be the fashion of the homage paid him.

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The Hindus, he continued, worship the same God as the Christians. The Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva is merely an embodiment of God the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. That the three are considered three instead of one is simply a corruption due to the fact that general humanity must have its ethics made tangible. So likewise the material images of Hindu gods are simply symbols of divine qualities.

He told, in explanation of the Hindu doctrine of incarnation, the story of Krishna, who was born by immaculate conception and the story of whom greatly resembles the story of Jesus. The teaching of Krishna, he claims, is the doctrine of love for its own sake, and he expressed [it] by the words "If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of religion, the love of God is its end."

His entire lecture cannot be sketched here, but it was a masterly appeal for brotherly love, and an eloquent defense of a beautiful faith. The conclusion was especially fine, when he acknowledged his readiness to accept Christ but must also bow to Krishna and to Buddha; and when, with a fine picture of the cruelty of civilization, he refused to hold Christ responsible for the crimes of progress.

On the following evening, Wednesday, January 17, Swamiji lectured in the rooms of the Woman's Council on "The Destiny of Man." The lecture was reviewed as follows by the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 18:

THE DESTINY OF MAN DISCUSSED

Lecture by Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo Monk.

The Eloquent Orator Talks Entertainingly of Man and His Destiny—Synopsis of His Lecture Last Night in the Rooms of the Woman's Council

"The Destiny of Man" was the subject of a lecture by Swami Vive Kananda last night at the Woman's Council-room, corner Second and Adams street.

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The audience was moderately large, and was made up of the best literary and musical talent of the city, including some of the most distinguished members of the legal fraternity and financial institutions.

The speaker differs in one respect in particular from some American orators. He advances his ideas with as much deliberation as a professor of mathematics demonstrates an example in algebra to his students. Kananda speaks with perfect faith in his own powers and ability to successfully hold his position against all argument. He advances no ideas, nor makes assertions that he does not follow up to a logical conclusion. Much of his lecture is something on the order of Ingersoll's philosophy. He does not believe in future punishment nor in God as Christians believe in Him. He does not believe the mind is immortal, from the fact that it is dependent, and nothing can be immortal except it is independent of all things. He says: "God is not a king sitting away in one corner of the universe to deal out punishment or rewards according to a man's deeds here on earth, and the time will come when man will know the truth, and stand up and say, 'I am God,' am life of His life. Why teach that God is far away when our real nature, our immortal principle is God?

"Be not deluded by your religion teaching original sin, for the same religion teaches original purity. When Adam fell he fell from purity. (Applause) Purity is our real nature, and to regain that is the object of all religion. All men are pure; all men are good. Some objections can be raised to them, and you ask why some men are brutes? That man you call a brute is like the diamond in the dirt and dust—brush the dust off and it is a diamond, just as pure as if the dust had never been on it, and we must admit that every soul is a big diamond.

"Nothing is baser than calling our brother a sinner. A lioness once fell upon a flock of sheep and killed a lamb. A sheep found a very young lion and it followed her and she gave it suck, and it grew up with the sheep and learned to eat grass like a sheep. One day an old lion saw the sheep lion and tried to get it away from the sheep, but it ran away

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as he approached. The big lion waited till he caught the sheep lion alone, and he seized it and carried it to a clear pool of water, and said, 'You are not a sheep, but a lion; look at your picture in the water.' The sheep lion, seeing its picture reflected from the water, said, 'I am a lion and not a sheep.' Let us not think we are sheep, but be lions, and don't bleat and eat grass like a sheep.

"For four months I have been in America. In Massachusetts I visited a reformatory prison. The jailer at that prison never knows for what crimes the prisoners are incarcerated. The mantle of charity is thrown around them. In another city there were three newspapers, edited by very learned men, trying to prove that severe punishment was a necessity, while one other paper contended that mercy was better than punishment. The editor of one paper proved by statistics that only 50 per cent of criminals who received severe punishment returned to honest lives, while 90 per cent of those who received light punishment returned to useful pursuits in life.

"Religion is not the outcome of the weakness of human nature; religion is not here because we fear a tyrant; religion is love, unfolding, expanding, growing. Take the watch—within the little case is machinery and a spring. The spring, when wound up, tries to regain its natural state. You are like the spring in the watch, and it is not necessary that all watches have the same kind of a spring, and it is not necessary that we all have the same religion. And why should we quarrel? If we all had the same ideas the world would be dead. External motion we call action; internal motion is human thought. The stone falls to the earth. You say it is caused by the law of gravitation. The horse draws the cart and God draws the horse. That is the law of motion. Whirlpools show the strength of the current; stop the current and stagnation ensues. Motion is life. We must have unity and variety. The rose would smell as sweet by any other name, and it does not matter what your religion is called.

"Six blind men lived in a village. They could not see the elephant, but they went out and felt of him. One put his hand on the elephant's tail, one of them on his side, one

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on his tongue [trunk], one on his ear. They began to describe the elephant. One said he was like a rope; one said he was like a great wall; one said he was like a boa constrictor, and another said he was like a fan. They finally came to blows and went to pummeling each other. A man who could see came along and inquired the trouble, and the blind men said they had seen the elephant and disagreed because one accused the other of lying. 'Well,' said the man, 'you have all lied; you are blind, and neither of you have seen it.' That is what is the matter with our religion. We let the blind see the elephant. (Applause.)

"A monk of India said, 'I would believe you if you were to say that I could press the sands of the desert and get oil, or that I could pluck the tooth from the mouth of the crocodile without being bitten, but I cannot believe you when you say a bigot can be changed.' You ask why is there so much variance in religions? The answer is this: The little streams that ripple down a thousand mountain sides are destined to come at last to the mighty ocean. So with the different religions. They are destined at last to bring us to the bosom of God. For 1,900 years you have been trying to crush the Jews. Why could you not crush them? Echo answers: Ignorance and bigotry can never crush truth."

The speaker continued in this strain of reasoning for nearly two hours, and concluded by saying: "Let us help, and not destroy."

II

At the behest of his already large following Swamiji delivered three more lectures in Memphis. The first two of these were held at La Salette Academy (Miss Moon's boarding-house) whose parlors were no doubt large enough to hold a sizable audience. On Friday evening the subject was "Reincarnation." It was reported upon by the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 20 as follows:

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IN A SOUTHERN CITY

VIVE KANANDA ON REINCARNATION

The Hindoo Monk Discourses on Metempsychosis.

An Appreciative Audience Is Enlightened on the Subject of the Transmigration of the Soul by the Learned Theosophist from the East.

Swami Vive Kananda, the beturbaned and yellow-robed monk, lectured again last night to a fair-sized and appreciative audience at the La Salette Academy on Third street.

Kananda's popularity has increased wonderfully since his arrival in this city, and especially is this noticeable among the ladies. To them he is like the latest sensation, they never grow tired of talking about him. Two-thirds of the audience last night were feminine and throughout the discourse they were most attentive, taking in every word that dropped from the speaker's lips as if they were pearls being given up by the bottomless seas.

The subject was "Transmigration of the Soul, or metempsychosis." Possibly Vive Kananda never appeared to greater advantage than in this role, so to speak. Metempsychosis is one of the most widely-accepted beliefs among the Eastern races, and one that they are ever ready to defend, at home or abroad. As Kananda said:

"Many of you do not know that it is one of the oldest religious doctrines of all the old religions. It was known among the Pharisees, among the Jews, among the first fathers of the Christian Church, and was a common belief among the Arabs. And it lingers still with the Hindoos and the Buddhists.

"This state of things went on until the days of science, which is merely a contemplation of energies. Now, you Western people believe this doctrine to be subversive of morality. In order to have a full survey of the argument, its logical and metaphysical features, we will have to go over all the ground. All of us believe in a moral governor of this universe; yet nature reveals to us instead of justice, injustice. One man is born under the best of circumstances.

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Throughout his entire life circumstances come ready made to his hands—all conducive to happiness and a higher order of things. Another is born, and at every point his life is at variance with that of his neighbor. He dies in depravity, exiled from society. Why so much impartiality [partiality] in the distribution of happiness?

"The theory of metempsychosis reconciles this disharmonious chord in your common beliefs. Instead of making us immoral, this theory gives us the idea of justice. Some of you say: 'It is God's will.' This is no answer. It is unscientific. Everything has a cause. The sole cause and whole theory of causation being left with God, makes him a most immoral creature. But materialism is as much illogical as the other. So far as we go, perception [causation?] involves all things. Therefore, this doctrine of the transmigration of the soul is necessary on these grounds. Here we are all born. Is this the first creation? Is creation something coming out of nothing? Analysed completely, this sentence is nonsense. It is not creation, but manifestation.

"A something cannot be the effect of a cause that is not. If I put my finger in the fire the burn is a simultaneous effect, and I know that the cause of the burn was the action of my placing my finger in contact with the fire. And as in the case of nature, there never was a time when nature did not exist, because the cause has always existed. But for argument sake, admit that there was a time when there was no existence. Where was all this mass of matter? To create something new would be the introduction of so much more energy into the universe. This is impossible. Old things can be re-created, but there can be no addition to the universe.

"No mathematical demonstration could be made that would have this theory of metempsychosis. According to logic, hypothesis and theory must not be believed. But my contention is that no better hypothesis has been forwarded by the human intellect to explain the phenomena of life.

"I met with a peculiar incident while on a train leaving the city of Minneapolis. There was a cowboy on the train. He was a rough sort of a fellow and a Presbyterian of the blue nose type. He walked up and asked me where I was

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from. I told him India. 'What are you?' he said. 'Hindoo,' I replied. 'Then you must go to hell,' he remarked. I told him of this theory, and after [my] explaining it he said he had always believed in it, because he said that one day when he was chopping a log his little sister came out in his clothes and said that she used to be a man. That is why he believed in the transmigration of souls. The whole basis of the theory is this: If a man's actions be good, he must be a higher being, and vice versa.

"There is another beauty in this theory—the moral motor [motive] it supplies. What is done is done. It says, 'Ah, that it were done better.' Do not put your finger in the fire again. Every moment is a new chance."

Vive Kananda spoke in this strain for some time, and he was frequently applauded.

Swami Vive Kananda will lecture again this afternoon at 4 o'clock at La Salette Academy on "The Manners and Customs of India."

The lecture on "The Manners and Customs of India" was poorly attended owing to the inclement weather. It was perhaps the smallness of the gathering that gave this lecture a somewhat informal aspect. As will be seen in the following report from the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 21, the ladies kept interrupting Swamiji to ask questions both relevant and irrelevant:

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN INDIA

Lecture by Swami Vive Kananda, The Hindoo Monk.

He Beautifully Describes the Traditions of His Native Country—A Cordial Welcome Has Been Extended the High Priest from India—He Lectures Again Tonight.

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, delivered a lecture at La Salette Academy yesterday afternoon. Owing to the pouring rain, a very small audience was present.

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The subject discussed was "Manners and Customs in India." Vive Kananda is advancing theories of religious thought which find ready lodgment in the minds of some of the most advanced thinkers of this as well as other cities of America.

His theory is fatal to the orthodox belief, as taught by the Christian teachers. It has been the supreme effort of Christian America to enlighten the beclouded minds of heathen India, but it seems that the oriental splendor of Kananda's religion has eclipsed the beauty of the old-time Christianity, as taught by our parents, and will find a rich field in which to thrive in the minds of some of the better educated of America.

This is a day of "fads," and Kananda seems to be filling a "long felt want." He is, perhaps, one of the most learned men of his country, and possesses a wonderful amount of personal magnetism, and his hearers are charmed by his eloquence. While he is liberal in his views, he sees very little to admire in the orthodox Christianity. Kananda has received more marked attention in Memphis than almost any lecturer or minister that has ever visited the city.

If a missionary to India was as cordially received as the Hindoo monk is here the work of spreading the gospel of Christ in heathen lands would be well advanced. His lecture yesterday afternoon was an interesting one from a historic point of view. He is thoroughly familiar with the history and traditions of his native country, from very ancient history up to the present, and can describe the various places and objects of interest there with grace and ease.

During his lecture he was frequently interrupted by questions propounded by the ladies in the audience, and he answered all queries without the least hesitancy, except when one of the ladies asked a question with the purpose of drawing him out into a religious discussion. He refused to be led from the original subject of his discourse and informed the interrogator that at another time he would give his views on the "transmigration of the soul," etc.

In the course of his remarks he said that his grandfather was married when he was 3 years old and his father

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married at 18, but he had never married at all. A monk is not forbidden to marry, but if he takes a wife she becomes a monk with the same powers and privileges and occupies the same social position as her husband.

In answer to a question, he said there were no divorces in India for any cause, but if, after 14 years of married life, there were no children in the family, the husband was allowed to marry another with the wife's consent, but if she objected he could not marry again. His description of the ancient mausoleums and temples were beautiful beyond comparison, and goes to show that the ancients possessed scientific knowledge far superior to the most expert artisans of the present day.

Swami Vivi Kananda will appear at the Y. M. H. A. Hall to-night for the last time in this city. He is under contract with the "Slayton Lyceum Bureau," of Chicago, to fill a three-years' engagement in this country. He will leave to-morrow for Chicago, where he has an engagement for the night of the 25th.

It is quite unlikely that Swamiji made the remark attributed to him in the third paragraph above regarding the marriage of monks. This must have been an aberration on the part of the reporter, for, as is well known, if a sannyasin takes a wife he is considered by Hindu society to be a fallen person and beyond the pale. Probably what Swamiji said was that if a married man should renounce the world, then his wife would do likewise. Or perhaps he said "priest."

Swamiji's "theory fatal to the orthodox belief" was too much for one Reverend G. T. Sullivan whose Sunday sermon was given in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 22. The Reverend Mr. Sullivan took as his theme a Biblical text often cited at the Parliament of Religions: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The sermon need not be quoted here. Suffice it to say that the Reverend Mr. Sullivan characterized the Parliament of Religions as "the greatest fraud of the Nineteenth Century." It might also be mentioned that in the course of his lecture he displayed a confusion typical in Western thought regarding the doctrine of reincarnation. Swamiji had just delivered a lecture on this subject and often took pains to set the matter straight, for it was, and perhaps still is, a stumbling block to the West's understanding of Eastern religions. Out of

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his fund of current misinformation, the Reverend Mr. Sullivan explained:

> Another feature of the world's [non-Christian] religion is, it does not recognize the immortality of man. Transmigration of the soul is taught; that is, our soul, they say, will go out into some animal, perhaps, or some other creature. . . . I would rather never to have lived to think my soul would go into an ox. I had rather not live at all than to die and be annihilated. Better be cast into the sea with a millstone about your neck than to be a materialist.

On Sunday, January 21, Swamiji held a discussion in the parlors of La Sallette Academy. The reporter from the *Appeal-Avalanche* was evidently deeply appreciative of the Hindu monk, and fortunately he was present at this meeting, for he gives us one of our rare and invaluable close-range word pictures of him:

> A TALK WITH THE HINDOO MONK.
>
> He Thinks Americans Are Materialists and Tells Why
>
> His Mission to This Country Is Not to Gain Converts to His Faith, But to Raise Funds for a College in His Native Land—His Religion.

> Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, whose lectures have attracted marked attention during his sojourn here, has been misunderstood, insomuch as the object of his visit to America is concerned. He is here not to propagate the doctrines of any religion of India and make converts to the same, but to raise the money wherewith to establish a polytechnic institution in his native land that shall be the nucleus around which he hopes to build an educational system that shall tend to develop the minds of his people along lines of thought to which, owing chiefly to their religious beliefs, they have been strangers heretofore.
>
> Kananda has no quarrel with the faith of the people of the Western world, as he calls Americans. While he sees

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much in their mode of life, their social and religious institutions, to disagree with, he does not criticise them unless called upon to do so. He is here rather to cull from American soil ideas and natural aid that will advance his people. As a conversationalist Kananda is very agreeable. Modest in his demeanor, he is inclined to be diffident until aroused by some query that affects his mission, his religion or his people. Then he is assertive, but never aggressive. Perhaps there is at times a tinge of irony, felt rather than seen, in his manner when contrasting the manners and customs of his people with those of the West, but being a gentleman by instinct, a scholar by training and a monk by choice he is always courteous and never impatient.

If there has been anything of the irascible in his nature it would surely have been developed last evening when, for an hour or more, he was subjected to a cross-fire of interrogatories that kept him ever on the alert and frequently on the defensive. The conversation was participated in by a number of those who have become interested in the work [monk] and his mission since he arrived in Memphis, among those present being a representative of the *Appeal-Avalanche*. Kananda has said much in behalf of his people and their religion and much concerning Americans and the doctrines of Christianity, and it was to ascertain something of the ground upon which he bases his claims for the Hindoo belief and to settle points not made clear by his discourses that the monk was induced to discuss certain interesting topics.

Kananda is diplomatic to a marked degree. While ever ready to reply to any question propounded him, he is, nevertheless, capable of amusing those that he does not see fit to enter into conversation in detail in a way that precludes further discussion, while not committing himself or offending his interrogator. He is remarkably well versed upon religious, scientific and metaphysical literature, not only of his own country but of the world as well, and is capable, by reason of his versatility, of maintaining himself in any position in which circumstances may cast his lot. There is throughout his bearing and conversation a certain child-like simplicity of manner that enlists one's sympathy, and con-

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vinces one of the sincerity of the man's utterances before he begins to speak.

According to Kananda, the spiritual life ought to be developed at any cost, and it is to the attainment of the spiritual rather than the material that his religion tends.

"I am a monk," he said, as he sat in the parlors of La Sallette Academy, which is his home while in Memphis, "and not a priest. When at home I travel from place to place, teaching the people of the villages and towns through which I pass. I am dependent upon them for my sustenance, as I am not allowed to touch money.

"I was born," he continued, in answer to a question, "in Bengal and became a monk and a celibate from choice. At my birth my father had a horoscope taken of my life, but would never tell me what it was. Some years ago when I visited my home, my father having died, I came across the chart among some papers in my mother's possession and saw from it that I was destined to become a wanderer on the face of the earth."

There was a touch of pathos in the speaker's voice and a murmur of sympathy ran around the group of listeners. Kananda knocked the ashes from his cigar and was silent for a space.

Presently some one asked:

"If your religion is all that you claim it is, if it is the only true faith, how is it that your people are not more advanced in civilization than they are? Why has it not elevated them among the nations of the world?"

"Because that is not the sphere of any religion," replied the Hindoo gravely. "My people are the most moral in the world, or quite as much as any other race. They are more considerate of their fellow man's rights, and even those of dumb animals, but they are not materialists. No religion has ever advanced the thought or inspiration of a nation or people. In fact, no great achievement has ever been attained in the history of the world that religion has not retarded. Your boasted Christianity has not proven an exception in this respect. Your Darwins, your Mills, your Humes, have never received the endorsement of your prelates. Why, then, criticize my religion on this account?"

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"I would not give a fig for a faith that does not tend to elevate mankind's lot on earth as well as his spiritual condition," said one of the group, "and therein I am not prepared to admit the correctness of your statements. Christianity has founded colleges, hospitals and raised the degenerate. It has elevated the downcast and helped its followers to live."

"You are right there to a certain extent," replied the monk calmly, "and yet it is not shown that these things are directly the result of your Christianity. There are many causes operating in the West to produce these results.

"Religious thought should be directed to developing man's spiritual side. Science, art, learning and metaphysical research all have their proper functions in life, but if you seek to blend them, you destroy their individual characteristics until, in time, you eliminate the spiritual, for instance, from the religious altogether. You Americans worship what? The dollar. In the mad rush for gold, you forget the spiritual until you have become a nation of materialists. Even your preachers and churches are tainted with the all-pervading desire. Show me one in the history of your people, who has led the spiritual lives that those whom I can name at home have done. Where are those who, when death comes, could say, 'O Brother Death, I welcome thee.' Your religion helps you to build Ferris wheels and Eiffel towers, but does it aid you in the development of your inner lives?"

The monk spoke earnestly, and his voice, rich and well modulated, came through the dusk that pervaded the apartment, half-sadly, half-accusingly. There was something of the weird in the comments of this stranger from a land whose history dates back 6,000 years upon the civilization of the Nineteenth Century America.

"But, in pursuing the spiritual, you lose sight of the demands of the present," said some one. "Your doctrine does not help men to live."

"It helps them to die," was the answer.

"We are sure of the present."

"You are sure of nothing."

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"The aim of the ideal religion should be to help one to live and to prepare one to die at the same time."

"Exactly," said the Hindoo, quickly, "and it is that which we are seeking to attain. I believe that the Hindoo faith has developed the spiritual in its devotees at the expense of the material, and I think that in the Western world the contrary is true. By uniting the materialism of the West with the spiritualism of the East I believe much can be accomplished. It may be that in the attempt the Hindoo faith will lose much of its individuality."

"Would not the entire social system of India have to be revolutionized to do what you hope to do?"

"Yes, probably, still the religion would remain unimpaired."

The conversation here turned upon the form of worship of the Hindoos, and Kananda gave some interesting information on this subject. There are agnostics and atheists in India as well as elsewhere. "Realization" is the one thing essential in the lives of the followers of Brahma. Faith is not necessary. Theosophy is a subject with which Kananda is not versed, nor is it a part of his creed unless he chooses to make it so. It is more of a separate study. Kananda never met Mme. Blavatsky, but has met Col. Olcott, of the American Theosophical Society. He is also acquainted with Annie Besant. Speaking of the "fakirs" of India, the famous jugglers or musicians [magicians], whose feats have made for them a world-wide reputation, Kananda told of a few episodes that had come within his observation and which almost surpass belief.

"Five months ago," he said, when questioned on this subject, "or just one month before I left India to come to this country, I happened in company in a caravan, or party of 25, to sojourn for a space in a city in the interior. While there we learned of the marvelous work of one of these itinerant magicians and had him brought before us. He told us he would produce for us any article we desired. We stripped him, at his request, until he was quite naked and placed him in the corner of the room. I threw my traveling blanket about him and then we called upon him to do as he had promised. He asked what we should like, and I

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asked for a bunch of California grapes, and straightway the fellow brought them forth from under his blanket. Oranges and other fruit were produced, and finally great dishes of steaming rice."

Continuing, the monk said he believed in the existence of a "sixth sense" and in telepathy. He offered no explanation of the feats of the fakirs, merely saying that they were very wonderful. The subject of idols came up and the monk said that idols formed a part of his religion insomuch as the symbol is concerned.

"What do you worship?" said the monk, "What is your idea of God?"

"The spirit," said a lady quietly.

"What is the spirit? Do you Protestants worship the words of the Bible or something beyond? We worship the God through the idol."

"That is, you attain the subjective through the objective," said a gentleman who had listened attentively to the words of the stranger.

"Yes, that is it," said the monk, gratefully.

Vive Kananda discussed further in the same strain until the call terminated as the hour for the Hindoo's lecture approached.

Vive Kananda goes to Chicago today.

That night Swamiji gave his last and, according to the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 22, his most stirring talk. This farewell lecture was announced in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 21 as follows:

Tonight Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, will lecture at the Young Men's Hebrew Association Hall on "Comparative Theology." Among the literary and thinking people generally of Memphis, he has attracted a great deal of attention. He possesses a keen mind, his ideas are broad and philosophic, and he reasons with a logic that is almost convincing. Altogether, he is a man of strong intellect, and his lectures are very instructive, especially to the student of religion and its more intimate relation to civilization and mankind.

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An announcement appeared also in the *Memphis Commercial* of January 21:

HE'LL SPEAK TO ALL CLASSES

Swami Vive Kananda Will Lecture on "Comparative Theology."

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu monk, will deliver a lecture tonight at the Young Men's Hebrew Association hall. His subject will be "Comparative Theology."

This lecture will not be in the interest of any institutions, but has been arranged by Col Hu Brinkley and some other gentlemen who, having heard the oriental orator and conversed with him, have been so impressed with his remarkable learning and talents that they desire all the people to have an opportunity to hear him. Swami Vive Kananda has been entertained in a public and private way by the citizens and has created a profound sensation in all cultured circles. His learning embraces such a wide range of subjects and his knowledge is so thorough that even specialists in the various sciences, theology, art and literature, learn from his utterances and absorb from his presence. The topic he has chosen for his oration tonight is one that he can treat with masterly ability and in a manner peculiarly his own. The conditions of the arrangements are such that the man would secure a large audience of all classes of people, as he no doubt will. The lecture will occur at the Young Men's Hebrew Association hall, and will begin at 8 o'clock.

It is interesting to note that although Swamiji was attempting to earn money by lecturing, it was evidently impossible for him not to contribute most of what he earned to some needy cause. Not only in Memphis, but in other towns, notably Boston, we see him lecturing for the benefit of various local charities. To judge from the report of "Comparative Theology" which appeared in the *Appeal-Avalanche* of January 22, that lecture was the only one delivered in Memphis the proceeds of which Swamiji did not give away (perhaps

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to one or another of Miss Moon's favorite charities). The article reads as follows:

GAVE HIS FAREWELL LECTURE

Swami Vive Kananda Makes the Grandest Effort of His Life.

"Comparative Theology" Was the Subject, and He Handled It in a Masterful Manner. The Discourse Was Interspersed With Eloquence and Logic.

"Comparative Theology" was the subject of a discourse last night by Swami Vive Kananda at the Young Men's Hebrew Association Hall. It was the blue-ribbon lecture of the series, and no doubt increased the general admiration the people of this city entertain for the learned gentleman.

Heretofore Vive Kananda has lectured for the benefit of one charity-worthy object or another, and it can be safely said that he has rendered them material aid. Last night, however, he lectured for his own benefit. The lecture was planned and sustained by Mr. Hu L. Brinkley, one of Vive Kananda's warmest friends and most ardent admirers. In the neighborhood of two hundred gathered at the hall last night to hear the eminent Easterner for the last time in this city.

The first question the speaker asserted in connection with the subject was: "Can there be such a distinction between religions as their creeds would imply?"

He asserted that no differences existed now, and he retraced the line of progress made by all religions and brought it back to the present day. He showed that such variance of opinion must of necessity have existed with primitive man in regard to the idea of God, but that as the world advanced step by step in a moral and intellectual way, the distinctions became more and more indistinct, until finally it had faded away entirely, and now there was one all-prevalent doctrine—that of an absolute existence.

"No savage," said the speaker, "can be found who does not believe in some kind of a god.

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"Modern science does not say whether it looks upon this as a revelation or not. Love among savage nations is not very strong. They live in terror. To their superstitious imaginations is pictured some malignant spirit, before the thought of which they quake in fear and terror. Whatever he likes he thinks will please the evil spirit. What will pacify him he thinks will appease the wrath of the spirit. To this end he labors ever against his fellow-savage."

The speaker went on to show by historical facts that the savage man went from ancestral worship to the worship of elephants, and later, to gods, such as the God of Thunder and Storms. Then the religion of the world was polytheism. "The beauty of the sunrise, the grandeur of the sunset, the mystifying appearance of the star-bedecked skies and the weirdness of thunder and lightning impressed primitive man with a force that he could not explain, and suggested the idea of a higher and more powerful being controlling the infinities that flocked before his gaze," said Vive Kananda.

Then came another period—the period of monotheism. All the gods disappeared and blended into one, the God of Gods, the ruler of the universe. Then the speaker traced the Aryan race up to that period, where they said: "We live and move in God. He is motion." Then there came another period known to metaphysics as the "period of Pantheism." This race rejected Polytheism and Monotheism, and the idea that God was the universe, and said "the soul of my soul is the only true existence. My nature is my existence and will expand to me."

Vive Kananda then took up Buddhism. He said that they neither asserted nor denied the existence of a God. Buddha would simply say, when his counsel was sought: "You see misery. Then try to lessen it." To a Buddhist misery is ever present, and society measures the scope of his existence. Mohammedans, he said, believed in the Old Testament of the Hindoo [Hebrew] and the New Testament of the Christian. They do not like the Christians, for they say they are heretics and teach man-worship. Mohammed ever forbade his followers having a picture of himself.

"The next question that arises," said he, "are these religions true or are some of them true and some of them

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false? They have all reached one conclusion, that of an absolute and infinite existence. Unity is the object of religion. The multiple of phenomena that is seen at every hand, is only the infinite variety of unity. An analysis of religion shows that man does not travel from fallacy to truth, but from a lower truth to a higher truth.

"A man brings in a coat to a lot of people. Some say the coat does not fit them. Well, you get out; you can't have a coat. Ask one Christian minister what is the matter with all the other sects that are opposed to his doctrines and dogmas, and he will answer: 'Oh, they're not Christians.' But we have better instruction than these. Our own natures, love and science—they teach us better. Like the eddies to a river, take them away and stagnation follows. Kill the difference in opinions, and it is the death of thought. Motion is necessity. Thought is the motion of the mind, and when that ceases death begins.

"If you put a simple molecule of air in the bottom of a glass of water it at once begins a struggle to join the infinite atmosphere above. So it is with the soul. It is struggling to regain its pure nature and to free itself from this material body. It wants to regain its own infinite expansion. This is everywhere the same. Among Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, agnostic or priest, the soul is struggling. A river flows a thousand miles down the circuitous mountain side to where it joins the seas and a man is standing there to tell it to go back and start anew and assume a more direct course! That man is a fool. You are a river that flows from the heights of Zion. I flow from the lofty peaks of the Himalayas. I don't say to you, go back and come down as I did, you're wrong. That is more wrong than foolish. Stick to your beliefs. The truth is never lost. Books may perish, nations may go down in a crash, but the truth is preserved and is taken up by some man and handed back to society, which proves a grand and continuous revelation of God."

On Monday, January 22, after less than a week in Memphis, Swamiji left for Chicago. During this short time perhaps hundreds

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of people had come in contact with him and, knowingly or unknowingly, had received his blessings.

III

In trying to trace Swamiji's footsteps through the Midwestern states of America one finds that at times the trail is clear; at other times it is altogether lost. But I think the reader will by now have received a general impression of the nature of his lecture tour and of the physical and mental suffering it cost him.

For months, the majority of which fell in the dead of a severe winter, Swamiji traveled almost incessantly, lecturing many times a week. As has been seen in the preceding chapters, he spent October and most of November in Chicago and nearby towns. Toward the end of November he traveled farther afield, presumably under the direction of the Slayton Lyceum Lecture Bureau, and commenced his long and arduous tour. The first cities on his itinerary were Madison, Minneapolis and Des Moines, all three of which he visited within the space of one short week.

Although after this we lose trace of Swamiji for almost two months, we can infer from various sources something of what this period was like. For instance, if the pace with which he began his tour in the last week of November was continued, as no doubt it was, then within the next seven weeks—to make a conservative estimate—he must have lectured in at least fifteen towns. The far-flung location of these towns we can judge from his own words. "Necessity," he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda, "makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in a southern state of America." This information may not be literal as regards the time element, but it nonetheless characterizes the lecture tour. A little of the nature of this period can also be gathered from the "Memoirs of Sister Christine." As has been mentioned in Chapter Three, she writes: "After the Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda was induced to place himself under the direction of Pond's [?] Lecture Bureau and make a lecture tour of the United States." She continues: "As is the custom, the committee at each new place was offered the choice of several lectures,—'The Divinity of Man,' 'Manners and Customs of India,' 'The Women of India,' 'Our Heritage.' . . . Invariably when the

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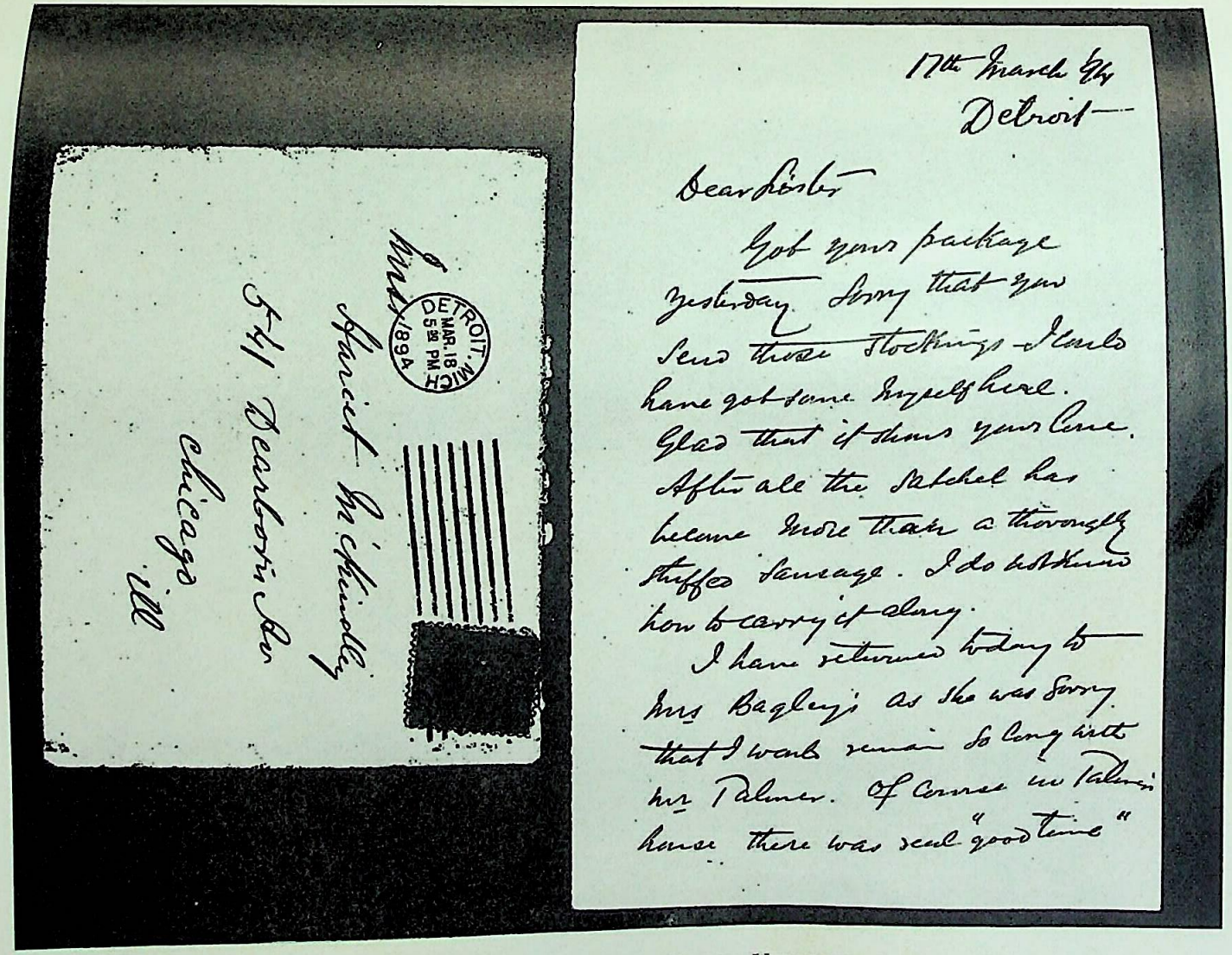

17th March 94
Detroit

Dear Sister

Got your package yesterday. Sorry that you send those stockings. I only have got same myself here. Glad that it shows your love. After all the satchel has become more than a thoroughly stuffed sausage. I do not know how to carry it along.

I have returned today to Mrs Bagley as she was sorry that I would remain so long with Mrs Palmer. Of course in Palmer house there was real "good time"

DETROIT, MICH. MAR. 18 5 30 PM 1894

Miss Harriet McKinlay
541 Dearborn Ave
Chicago
Ill

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Continued overleaf)

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She is a real jewel here. Fellow, and Critics Gostins "a Celt too much and his "Robert Scotts". But he is refreshing innocent and childlike in his simplicity. We are very sorry that she came away but I could nothing.

Here is a beautiful young girl. I don her twice I do not remember her name. So Brain so beautiful so spiritual. Do honorably. Lord bless her - She came this morning with her income and talked so humbly as days as spiritually - that I felt quite astonished. She knows every thing about the yogis and is keenly fond of practice!!

"Thy ways are beyond searching out". Lord bless her So innocent, holy and pure. This is the greatest recompence in my terribly toilsome, miserable life - the finding of holy happy faces like you from time to time. The great Buddhist prayer is "I bow down to all holy men on earth" I feel the real meaning of this prayer ~~at~~ whenever I see a face upon which the finger of the Lord has written in unmistakable letters "Mine". May you all be happy blessed - good & pure as you are for ever & ever. May your feet never touch the mud and dirt of this terrible world. May you live and pass away like flowers as you are born is the constant prayer of your brother Vivekananda

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place was a mining town with no intellectual life whatever, the most abstruse subjects were selected. He told us the difficulty of speaking to an audience when he could see no ray of intelligence in response."

Evidently the lecture bureau led Swamiji on a regular "barn-storming" tour, advertising him, as Romain Rolland tells us in "Prophets of the New India," "as if he were a circus turn." The picture which comes to mind of Swamiji making one-night stands week after week, enduring all the hardships of winter travel, keeping account of luggage and of money, meeting the blank and perhaps often stony faces of small-town audiences, being besieged, after having just delivered a lecture on "The Divinity of Man," by questions concerning the feeding of Hindu infants to the Ganges crocodiles, is one which appalls the imagination. His visits to the larger cities, as for instance, Memphis, Tennessee, where intellectual torpor was less ingrained and fundamentalism less pronounced, were no doubt a relief to him, but even there the pace was grueling and the demands made upon his energy unrelenting.

But lest I give the reader too gloomy a picture of Swamiji's life, at this time I should like to present evidence that there were spots of light in this wearisome and lonely tour. The Middle West was, after all, not a totally unrelieved spiritual desert. Scattered here and there were people who, at least to some extent, understood and spoke his language, and to come across such rare souls naturally delighted his heart and lifted for a time the dead weight of his burden. A letter which Swamiji wrote from Detroit to Miss Isabelle McKindley and which has never before been published tells of one of these bright spots. Since he rarely wrote to India regarding the details of his American experiences, good or bad, this letter, I believe, is especially valuable, giving as it does so intimate and rare a glimpse into his itinerant life. Although chronologically the letter should be presented later on in the narrative, I do not think it is out of place here:

17th March '94
Detroit

Dear Sister,

Got your package yesterday. Sorry that you send those stockings—I could have got some myself here. Glad that it shows your love. After all the satchel has become more than a thoroughly stuffed sausage. I do not know how to carry it along.

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I have returned today to Mrs. Bagley's as she was sorry that I would remain so long with Mr. Palmer. Of course in Palmer's house there was real "good time" He is a real jovial heartwhole fellow, and likes "good time" a little too much and his "hot Scotch" But he is right along innocent and childlike in his simplicity.

He was very sorry that I came away but I could not help. Here is a beautiful young girl I saw her twice I do not remember her name. So Brainy so beautiful so spiritual so unworldly. Lord bless her—She came this morning with Mrs. M'cDuvel and talked so beautifully and deep and spiritually—that I was quite astounded. She knows everything about the yogis and is herself much advanced in Practice! !

"Thy ways are beyond searching out" Lord bless her so innocent, holy and pure. This is the grandest recompence in my terribly toilsome, miserable life—the finding of holy happy faces like you from time to time The great Budhist prayer is "I bow down to all holy men on earth" I feel the real meaning of this prayer whenever I see a face upon which the finger of the Lord has written in unmistakeable letters "mine." May you all be happy blessed—good and pure as you are for ever and ever. May your feet never touch the mud and dirt of this terrible world. May you live and pass away like flowers as you are born is the constant prayer of your brother

Vivekananda

It would perhaps not be amiss to tell at this point something of Miss Isabelle McKindley, to whom the above letter was written, and of the Hale family to which she belonged. The story of how Swamiji first met the Hales just before the opening of the Parliament of Religions has become a legend and need not be repeated here. It can be said, however, that the family almost at once became, as it were, his own. The Hales' home served as a kind of pivot for his Midwestern tour, an oasis to which he could return from time to time and there find the refreshing atmosphere of sheer goodness. A brief description of these "headquarters" can be found in a letter to Swami Ramakrishnananda. "I shall now tell you something of the Hales

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THE FOUR COUSINS

Left to Right: HARRIET MCKINDLEY, MARY HALE, ISABELLE MCKINDLEY, HARRIET HALE

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MISS ISABELLE MCKINDLEY

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to whose address you direct my letters," Swamiji wrote in September of 1894. "He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces and a son. The son lives away from home and earns a living. The daughters live at home.... All the four are young and not yet married.... They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through contact with me and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

"The two daughters are blondes, that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a kindergarten school; but the daughters do not earn.... The girls call me brother, and I address Mrs. Hale as mother. All my things are at their place, and they look after them, wherever I may go."

The kindergarten conducted by the two Hale nieces, Isabelle and Harriett McKindley, was in its day a somewhat startling innovation. While charity kindergartens for children of destitute parents were comparatively well known, private kindergartens for the children of the rich were a new departure in the field of education. It was to this latter type of school that the McKindley girls gave their time. "It would be impossible to find women of more culture, refinement and intelligence than the little band of kindergartners," a contemporary newspaper writes of the McKindleys and their colleagues. "They are all well connected and known socially, which seems almost necessary, since they must gain the whole confidence of the mothers and come in such close and frequent contact with them. They are earnest women who appreciate the importance of the work they are doing, and they are giving the very best of themselves to it." "Miss [Isabelle] McKindley has a wonderfully comprehensive grasp of the work, and her attitude with the children is all that love and wisdom could suggest. She has a fine mind and is a brilliant conversationalist."

A line drawing of Isabelle McKindley accompanies the article from which the above quotation is taken, showing her classical beauty and her resemblance to the *Venus de Milo*—a resemblance that was remarked upon by her family and that Swamiji verified for himself when he later visited Europe. "By the by," he wrote to Mary Hale from Calcutta on May 30, 1897, "I saw the Venus of what do you call it—and you are right—Isabelle's face is much like that statue. Of course her hands are better, for the statue has only stumps—that is to say, to our uneducated taste. Anyhow Isabelle is beautiful because

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she is like Venus and that Venus is beautiful because she is like Isabelle!! On the whole I think she is much more beautiful than the statue, stumps notwithstanding."

With his keen perception and concern for their future, the girls' beloved "brother" once wrote a character sketch of them: "Harriett [Hale] will have a most blessed and happy life," he predicted, "because she is not so imaginative and sentimental as to make a fool of herself. She has enough of sentiment as to make life sweet, and enough common sense and gentleness as to soften the hard points in life which must come to everyone. So has Harriett McKindley in a still higher degree. She is just the girl to make the best of wives. . . . You, Mary, are like a mettlesome Arab—grand, splendid. You will make a splendid queen, physically, mentally. You will shine alongside of a dashing, bold, adventurous heroic husband; but, my dear sister, you will make one of the worst wives. You will take the life out of our easy-going, practical, plodding husbands of the everyday world. . . . As to sister Isabelle she has the same temperament as you; only this kindergarten has taught her a good lesson of patience and forbearance. Perhaps she will make a good wife."

Although Swamiji loved all four "sisters" it was not the two gentle and sensible Harrietts whom he found the most companionable. Rather it was the two "mettlesome Arabs," Mary Hale and Isabelle McKindley. His deep and abiding affection for Mary Hale is well known to readers of his published letters, but not so his affection for Isabelle McKindley, for his letters to the latter have been unknown. Fortunately, however, in the bundle of papers that Swami Vishwananda discovered and made available to us (Chapter Three) were many letters from Swamiji to Isabelle McKindley, one of which has been given above and most of which will be produced in the course of this narrative. Suffice it to say here that they show how fond he was of her, confiding to her his various thoughts, allowing her to attend to many small personal matters for him and feeling sure that in whatever mood he wrote—playful or serious—his letters would be read in a matching spirit.

Isabelle was perhaps as dear to Swamiji as was Mary Hale. But however that may be, all four Hale "sisters" must have been extraordinary young women, born, as he writes, "like flowers," "good and pure," their faces "holy, happy," for otherwise he could not have associated with them as intimately as he did throughout the years. "You are all so kind, the whole family, to me," he wrote to Mary

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Hale from India in 1898, "I must have belonged to you in the past as we Hindus say." And again in 1899, "It is curious, your family, Mother Church [Mrs. Hale] and her clergy, both monastic and secular, have made more impression on me than any family I know of. Lord bless you ever and ever."

But to return to the Midwestern lecture tour, such "holy happy faces" as those of the Hales and McKindleys were few and far between, and on the whole we cannot but look upon the tour as an ordeal in which, as Sister Nivedita writes, using Swamiji's own words, "he was 'bowled along from place to place, being broken the while!' "

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CHAPTER SIX

THE CLIMAX AT DETROIT

I

Having left Memphis on January 22, Swamiji arrived in Chicago in time to keep an engagement on the evening of the 25th. Although no reports can be found in the contemporaneous Chicago papers to throw light on this visit, he presumably remained in Chicago almost three weeks, for on Sunday, February 11, he lunched there with Mr. and Mrs. Woodhead and Carl von Bergen, at which time he copied out a passage from a travel book on India. This passage was quoted earlier and readers will remember that the back of one of the pages on which he had written bore a notation to the effect that he left Chicago for Detroit on Monday, February 12.

In "The Life" and other biographies very little has been said of Swamiji's visit to Detroit in 1894, and one is left with the impression that this city was just another on his itinerary where he delivered a few lectures and received the usual amount of both acclaim and criticism. Although it is true that we have been able to learn from the memoirs of Sister Christine and Mrs. Mary Funke something of the extraordinary and radiant power which he manifested during his Detroit lectures, nowhere is there an intimation that the Detroit period was one of the most important in his American mission, almost equal in significance to that of the Parliament of Religions. The old Detroit newspapers, however, tell the story of what took place, without a knowledge of which Swamiji's Midwestern tour seems inconclusive and, coming after the Parliament of Religions, almost anticlimactic.

Detroit is known as "the dynamic city" not only because it is today one of the greatest industrial centers of the world, but because it was always, from early days, a town of energy and enterprise. One of the oldest cities in the United States, it is also one of the most restless, "ever renewing itself," as one historian writes, "lucky—or at least versatile—in finding new sources of wealth, new patterns of life, new inventions to profit by, new contentions to debate." Although in February of 1894 the first automobile had not yet chugged

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along the streets, industry had long been thriving, and the people, of whom there were a little over two hundred thousand, were energetic and adventurous, alive to every issue and ready to battle for every opinion. Detroit was, in a sense, a turbulent vortex of the contemporaneous thought of the nation, both conservative and radical, and this fact, together with the fact that Swamiji's power was rising to a peak, tended to make his visit there akin to the explosion of a long-brewing storm.

The first clouds had gathered, of course, at the Parliament of Religions. Although at that historic assembly every effort had been made to maintain a spirit of "tolerance and fraternity," and although displays of antagonism had been forbidden, the animosity of the more rigidly orthodox toward non-Christian religions had broken through in unrestrained bursts of anger. Politic hand-clasps with the heathen and fraternal smiles had overstrained the endurance of many a clergyman, and it is little wonder that directly after the Parliament was over good manners were dropped altogether. Indeed it was considered a Christian duty to drop them. "While in the parliament, he [Swamiji] was here as our guest," wrote the editor of a Presbyterian newspaper in Chicago, "but now that it is over we ought to make an enthusiastic attack against him and his false doctrines." In this spirit of Christian righteousness Swamiji was openly persecuted and denounced.

"However a man may conduct himself," he wrote later to Mrs. Bull, "there will always be persons who invent the blackest lies about him. At Chicago I had such things every day against me!"

But that was only the beginning. During the next four months, as Swamiji toured the Midwest, attracting large crowds and gaining the acclaim and support of influential citizens, antagonism against him increased. The pulpits rang with frantic repudiations of his teachings and equally frantic affirmations of the superiority of Christianity. As in Memphis, perhaps in almost every town where Swamiji lectured horrified clergymen warned their flocks against the heathen and his false doctrines. Yet, although these cries were loud and anguished, it was not until he reached Detroit that his opponents launched, for the first time, an unrestrained and concerted attack against his every word—particularly his words regarding conditions in India and the value of Christian missions.

On reading the diatribes against Swamiji, it is hard today to comprehend that they were not the work of a few fanatics and cranks, but were representative of a solid block of contemporary opinion and

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prejudice. Bigotry, hiding behind a guise of moral righteousness, was a national force, a force which was, it is true, dying out, but, because dying, all the more virulent. Swamiji faced the assault of opposition undaunted. He was the warrior monk, whose only reaction to criticism and slander was an increase in power, and who strode on without the slightest hesitation, fighting never for himself but for his motherland and also for America.

On February 12, 1894, when Swamiji arrived in Detroit, he was greeted by a blizzard. It was a fitting reception, foreshadowing the antagonism that was to howl around him for the next six weeks. But this was not the only welcome he received, and the other, though in sharp contrast, was equally prophetic. On the evening following his arrival Mrs. John J. Bagley, one of Detroit's most influential women, who had met Swamiji six months earlier at the Parliament of Religions and who was now his hostess, honored him with an enormous and gala reception to which the whole town, as it were, was invited. Here in the warm, cheerful drawing rooms of Mrs. Bagley's home the leading lights of Detroit's social and cultural life paid their respects to the famous Hindoo monk, and here again was a foreshadowing of what was to come. For throughout Swamiji's Detroit visit he was fêted and championed by many friends who loved and revered him.

Mrs. Bagley's reception was one such as the town had not seen for a long time. The invitation list, which was printed in the *Detroit Free Press* of February 14, was imposing, including the names of bishops, clergymen, rabbis, professors, the mayor and his wife and at least three hundred of the cream of Detroit society. The list occupies an eleven-inch column of small type. Swamiji, whose last wish would have been to be taken up by "the best people," had nevertheless become the "social lion of the day," as the following item from the *Detroit Journal* of February 14, 1894, makes clear:

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL

The social lion of the day is Swami (brother) Vive Kananda. He is the guest of Mrs. John J. Bagley at her home on Grand Circus park, and last night was given a reception that was one of the most important social functions that has taken place in Detroit this season.

The most common impression that prevails of the great east, its philosophy and mysticism, is akin in character and

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color to the impression that was received from the reading of the "Arabian Knights." Perhaps in the whole of literature, excepting the bible, there is no book that has left so marked an impression as these thousand fairy tales. They are entrancing in themselves and were read and are read by every boy and girl in the land when the mind and imagination were so susceptible to such influences that the impressions are indelible.

The popular mind in a hazy sort of a way, realizes India as a land of ghastly and beautiful mysteries, and when it was ingeniously announced that a monk of the Hindoo religion, one of the eminent ecclesiastics of the country, was to be a guest in Detroit, society turned its eyes in an easternly and heavenly direction and expected to see him appear on a white horse in mid air. Even after he had properly arrived on a railroad train and had been typographically announced by the reporters, there was still an eagerness to see realized in flesh and blood one of the fascinating figures of childhood dreams.

Aside from exhausting the visiting list of exclusive society in compiling the invitation list Mrs. Bagley made a special effort to bring to her reception, thinkers of all religions and creeds. In this she was extremely successful. There has not gathered in a home in Detroit in many a day and perhaps never such a distinguished assemblage of Detroiters as were present last evening to meet the polished Hindoo monk. The reception with its dignities and formalities was entirely worthy of its reason.

Swami Vive Kananda speaks perfect English and was able to be pleasantly intimate with the men and women, who did themselves the honor to be present in Mrs. Bagley's home last evening.

Tonight, tomorrow night, and Saturday night he will lecture at the Unitarian church, under the auspices of the Unity club. Tonight the subject of his lecture will be "Manners and Customs in India" and he will be introduced by Bishop Ninde.

The *Detroit Tribune* of February 14 commented more satisfactorily upon the reception, and in the following report one can almost

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see Swamiji in his robe and turban beaming upon the ladies and gentlemen who flocked about him in the gas-lit drawing rooms of Mrs. Bagley's spacious home.

THEY MET KANANDA

A Reception to the Hindu Monk at Mrs. Bagley's

One of the Most Brilliant Affairs of the Kind This Season.

The Distinguished Oriental Greatly Pleased at the Opportunity to Meet a Real American Blizzard—He Charmed Everyone with His Manner Last Night.

An exceptionally large and representative assemblage—pronounced by many of the guests present the most brilliant reception of many years—filled the large hospitable rooms last evening of the Bagley home on Washington avenue, which has been the scene of so many famous gatherings. The reception was given by Mrs. J. J. Bagley in honor of the Hindu monk and scholar, Swami Vive Kananda. His English was polished, his smile cordial, his manners dignified and pleasing, and he made a most picturesque and attractive feature in his long robe of orange, with its scarlet sash, and his pink turban. He conversed easily and happily with the throng that crowded around him and expressed himself as highly favored by having a chance to witness the American "blizzard" of Monday. As snow was an unknown quantity to him until he came to America, and as Monday gave him his first experience with a flying snowstorm, it all forms a few more links in his chain of experiences, and experiences he considers the only items that can minister to growth.

Mrs. Bagley formed a charming picture by his side with her fair and madonna like face framed in its characteristic bands of smooth hair and the pale gray gown shading into delicate old lace at the throat and wrists. She was assisted in receiving by Mrs. John Newbury Bagley, Mrs. Florence Bagley Sherman, Miss Olive Bagley and Miss Helen Bagley. Roses bloomed in profusion and the dining room was brilliant in an arrangement of poinsettia and smilax.

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> One noticeable fact was that nearly all the religious denominations in the city were represented, which was an appropriate carrying out of the idea of the congress of religions at Chicago last summer, in which Kananda was so prominent and so earnest. It was not only a society but an intellectual gathering and as such of unusual interest. The following is the invitation list and as all but about one hundred of those invited were present it shows that the guests who were in attendance came because they desired to do so, while all present felt more than repaid in the enjoyment of the rare hospitality of the home and the unique pleasure they had in meeting the guest of honor: . . . [Here follows the long invitation list mentioned above.]
>
> Kananda will deliver his first lecture at the Unitarian Church under the auspices of the Unity Club tonight, and will be introduced by Bishop Ninde of the M. E. Church. The bishop has been in India and is especially interested in the lecturer's subject, "Manners and Customs of India."

There was a discordant note in this reception that the reporter does not mention and that must have been infinitely more embarrassing to Mrs. Bagley than to Swamiji. Despite the warmth of her drawing rooms, a little of the blizzard crept in. In a letter which was printed in the *Detroit Free Press* of February 23 and which will be quoted in full in another connection, we find the following information: "Before he ever addressed one word to the public here, a woman, be it said to her shame, took it upon herself to attack and most unkindly denounce him to his face in a house to which she was invited as a guest to meet him." How often Swamiji met with such malicious persecution in America one can only guess—perhaps every day; and this, as he once wrote, from "the very Christian of Christians!"

Inasmuch as Mrs. Bagley was close to Swamiji and befriended him, it is perhaps well to know more about her than has been hitherto known by readers of his biographies. She is spoken of in "The Life" as "the widow of the ex-governor of Michigan and a lady of rare culture and unusual spirituality." She was also a woman of unusual spirit, for in those days to be hostess to a "heathen" who was preached against in orthodox pulpits was to court many a raised eyebrow and pursed lip. Mrs. Bagley was undoubtedly severely criticized. We have learned from her granddaughter, Mrs. Frances Bagley Wallace, who

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was nine years old when Swamiji first came to Detroit, that the children at the private school she was attending made faces at her because her family was host to the heathen—faces that undoubtedly reflected the horrified shock of their elders.

But Mrs. Bagley was in a position not only to withstand criticism but to command the leading citizens of Detroit, clergymen and all, to greet her guest on his arrival, and thus many who otherwise might not have dared approach Swamiji for fear of social stricture came into his presence and benefited by his influence.

Mrs. Bagley was born in Rutland, Ohio, in 1833. Her father, the Reverend Samuel Newbury, a Presbyterian minister from Vermont, was "a man of great mental vigor and enthusiasm," and her mother "a spirited woman of culture and executive ability." During her childhood she was taken on many travels abroad, which may account for the fact that she was, for the age in which she lived, unusually liberal in her outlook.

In 1855 she was married to the young John Judson Bagley of Detroit, who had just embarked upon the manufacture of a fine-cut chewing tobacco. In those days small beginnings plus great enterprise quickly resulted in huge fortunes. Bagley prospered. He became a director in several banks, a power in the Republican Party in Michigan and, in 1872, when he was forty, governor of the state. He was well known in Detroit for his progressive ideas in charitable, religious and political affairs, and one might well believe that had he lived to know Swamiji he would have understood and loved him. But Bagley died in 1887 at the age of forty-nine.

In the meantime, Mrs. Bagley had been extremely active. During her husband's governorship, she was "much admired and esteemed for her refined and elegant manners and the intelligence with which she aided him in all philanthropic work." She was, moreover, busy with many undertakings of her own. In connection with the Unitarian Church, of which she was a member, she taught a Sunday Bible class on ancient religion, a class so popular that it soon overflowed the church parlors. She was also instrumental in organizing a union Sunday school near Detroit's House of Correction, where for many years she taught a class of young women. At the time of Governor Bagley's death she was president of the Woman's Hospital, which she had helped to found. She was also actively interested in Detroit's Industrial School and various other charitable institutions whose object was to educate and uplift the poor from a life of ignorance and drudgery.

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MRS. JOHN J. BAGLEY

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MRS. BAGLEY'S RESIDENCE, DETROIT

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It is obvious that Mrs. Bagley took a keen and warm interest in contemporaneous humanity, but her interest extended also to ancient cultures. She was a member of the English Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Study and of the Archeological Institute of America, whose Michigan branch was organized at her house. She was also a corresponding member of the Anthropological Society in Washington and of the Egyptian Exploration Society. Aside from all these various interests and activities she found time throughout her life to travel widely.

In 1893, Mrs. Bagley was elected one of the lady managers at the Chicago World's Fair. At the time of her appointment it was said of her: "An extensive acquaintance throughout Europe and America has admirably fitted Mrs. Bagley for a commissioner at large. Being an example of the society born and reared in the state of which Chicago is the Metropolis, free from provincial prejudices, of cosmopolitan tastes, genial in manner, and having a warmth of nature, she will help to serve as hostess of our American society when the people from beyond the oceans shall seek the shores of this continent."

It was undoubtedly at one of the elaborate receptions held for the delegates during the first week of the Parliament that Mrs. Bagley first met Swamiji. Whether she was instrumental in arranging for him to lecture in Detroit is not certain; it *is* certain, however, that upon his arrival she gave him, as it were, the key to the city. One might even say that she introduced him to Detroit were it not for the fact that even before her reception the city was in a state of excitement over the arrival of the distinguished and already famous Hindu. On February 11, the *Detroit Free Press* heralded his coming with a short but excited announcement, a portion of which has been quoted in "The Life." The article was accompanied by a line drawing of the photograph that shows Swamiji standing with arms folded and that was used as a colored poster during the Parliament. The full text reads as follows:

FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

A Distinguished Brahman Coming to Detroit.

He is Said to be an Eloquent and Fascinating Orator.

The people of this country are already beginning to be familiar with many oriental peoples. The Chinese and

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Japanese are well-known figures in the streets of all cities and large towns. They belong chiefly to the common people and so the more highly educated and cultured members of these races are scarcely known to us. This is true of both classes of India. They are rare and novel, and a high caste Brahman is almost a natural curiosity. They were, however, among the most distinguished and attractive in the congregations of the world's fair, and especially the parliament of religions. One of the most popular of these Hindu representatives was Swami Vive Kananda, formerly a high caste Brahman who abandoned his order for the sake of joining a brotherhood of monks, whose first principle is to sacrifice their pride by relinquishing their Brahminical privileges. He showed himself to be one of the best of orators at the congress, speaking faultless English without notes, and with an utterance that many of his hearers declared would of itself have been music had you not understood a word.

Since the parliament he has spoken to immense audiences in many towns and cities who have but one opinion of praise and [are] enthusiastic over his magnetic power, and his way of giving light and life to every subject he touches. Naturally his views of great questions, coming like himself from the other side of the globe, are refreshing and stirring to American people. His hearers are pleasantly astonished when the dark-hued, dark-haired, dignified man arises in rich yellow robes and speaks their own language with fluency, distinctness and correctness.

He is to address Detroit audiences at the Unitarian church, on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings of this week.

The day after Swamiji's arrival he was visited and interviewed by a reporter from the *Detroit Free Press*. The reader will notice that during this interview he touched upon the same problem as he had during a discussion in Memphis, Tennessee—the problem of combining material power with spirituality. The development of a new type of man who would combine the "energy of the lion with the gentleness of the lamb," typifying the union of West and East, was later to take a prominent place in Swamiji's thought. The interview, which was published on February 14, read as follows:

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THE CLIMAX AT DETROIT

SWAMI VIVE KANANDA

The Distinguished Hindoo Monk is in Town.

Differences Between Creed and Religions Defined.

Interesting Conversation with the Visitor.

He will Give Several Lectures at the Unitarian Church.

The complacency of the Hindoo god is superlative. Nothing disturbs him; nothing ruffles the infinite calm which rests upon his features; nothing changes the placid conscientiousness of his inner life. More inscrutable than the Sphinx, the mysticism of the Indian atmosphere surrounds him and with eyes which seem infinite in their wisdom he has gazed and continues to gaze upon the developments of religious ideas, and only those versed in Sanscrit lore question the mute lips. Beside the multitude of Oriental hearts that have bowed down before the eastern mountain of life, a band of westerners, with Edwin Arnold and others acting as guides, have wandered as pilgrims into the recesses of the old country, which suffers a material decadence whatever may be its spiritual condition. Swami Vive Kananda, a monk of the Hindoo religion, is in the city, the guest of Mrs. John J. Bagley, and while here he will deliver a number of lectures. Swami (or Brother) Vive Kananda attracted much attention at the Chicago congress of religions, his wonderful eloquence and profound spirituality marking him as a unique and impressive figure among the masters assembled on that occasion. Strange as it may appear, the Indian exponent of divine doctrines made many converts in the Windy City, and he received a great deal of adulation. His personality is charming.

Upon hearing that the eastern monk was coming here, a certain lady said: "I think it is so funny that they should bring to Detroit a heathen to speak upon religious matters. Why, he has even converted many people since he came to this country."

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In this connection the conversation which the representative of The Free Press had with the gentleman seems especially significant, indicating an entire lack of the missionary spirit in the distinguished visitor. Swami is a person of medium stature, with the dusky complexion common with people of his nationality, gentle in manner, deliberate in movement, and extremely courteous in every word, movement and gesture. But the most striking feature of his personality are his eyes, which are of great brilliancy. The conversation naturally drifted upon the subject of religion, when Swami said among many other striking remarks:

"I make the distinction between religion and creed. Religion is the acceptance of all existing creeds, seeing in them the same striving toward the same destination. Creed is something antagonistic and combative. There are different creeds because there are different people, and the creed is adapted to the commonwealth where it furnishes what people want. As the world is made up of infinite variety of persons of different natures, intellectually, spiritually and materially, so these people take to themselves that form of belief in the existence of a great and good moral law, which is best fitted for them. Religion recognizes and is glad of the existence of all these forms, because of the beautiful underlying principle. The same goal is reached by different routes and my way would not be suited perhaps to the temperament of my western neighbor, the same that his route would not commend itself to my disposition and philosophical way of thinking. I belong to the Hindoo religion. That is not the Buddhists' creed, one of the sects of the Hindoo religion. We never indulge in missionary work. We do not seek to thrust the principles of our religion upon anyone. The fundamental principles of our religion forbid that. Nor do we say anything against any missionaries whom you send from this country anywhere. For all of us they are entirely welcome to penetrate the innermost recesses of the earth. Many come to us, but we do not struggle for them; we have no missionaries striving to bring anyone to our way of thinking. With no effort from us many forms of the Hindoo religion are spreading far and wide, and these manifestations have taken the form of Christian science,

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theosophy, and Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." Our religion is older than most religions and the Christian creed—I do not call it a religion, because of its antagonistic features—came directly from the Hindoo religion. It is one of the great offshoots. The Catholic religion also takes all its forms from us, the confessional, the belief in saints and so on, and a Catholic priest who saw this absolute similarity and recognized the truth of the origin of the Catholic religion was dethroned from his position because he dared to publish a volume explaining all that he observed and was convinced of."

"You recognise agnostics in your religion?" was asked.

"Oh, yes; philosophical agnostics and what you call infidels. When Buddha, who is with us a saint, was asked by one of his followers: 'Does God exist?' He replied: 'God. When have I spoken to you about God? This I tell you, be good and do good.' The philosophical agnostics, there are many of us, believe in the great moral law underlying everything in nature and in the ultimate perfection. All the creeds which are accepted by all people are but the endeavors of humanity to realize that infinity of self which lies in the great future."

"Is it beneath the dignity of your religion to resort to missionary effort?"

For reply the visitor from the orient turned to a little volume and referred to an edict among other remarkable edicts.

"This," he said, "was written 200 B.C., and will be the best answer I can give you to that question."

In delightfully clear, well modulated tones, he read:

"The King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, honors all sects, both ascetics and householders; he propitiates them by alms and other gifts, but he attaches less importance to gifts and honors than to the endeavor to promote the essential moral virtues. It is true the prevalence of essential virtues differs in different sects, but there is a common basis. That is, gentleness, moderation in language and morality. Thus, one should not exalt one's own sect and decry others, but tender them on every occasion the honor they deserve. Striving thus, one promotes the welfare of his own sect, while

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serving the others. Striving otherwise, one does not serve his own sect, while disserving others and whosoever from attachment to his own sect and with a view to promote it decries others, only deals rude blows to his own sect. Hence, concord alone is meritorious, so that all bear and love to bear the beliefs of each other. It is with this purpose that this edict has been inscribed ; that all people, whatever their fate may be, should be encouraged to promote the essential moral doctrines in each and mutual respect for all the other sects. It is with this object that the ministers of religion, the inspectors and other bodies of officers should all work."

After reading this impressive passage Swami Vive Kananda remarked that the same wise king who had caused this edict to be inscribed had forbidden the indulgence of war, as its horrors were antagonistic to all the principles of the great and universal moral doctrine. "For this reason," remarked the visitor, "India has suffered in its material aspect. Where brute strength and bloodshed has advanced other nations India has deprecated such brutal manifestations and by the law of the survival of the fittest, which applies to nations as well as to individuals, it has fallen behind as a power on the earth in the material sense."

"But will it not be an impossibility to find in the great combative western countries, where such tremendous energy is needed to develop the pressing practical necessities of the nineteenth century, this spirit which prevails in placid India?"

The brilliant eyes flashed and a smile crossed the features of the eastern brother.

"May not one combine the energy of the lion with the gentleness of the lamb?" he asked.

Continuing, he intimated that perhaps the future holds the conjunction of the east and the west, a combination which would be productive of marvelous results. A condition which speaks well for the natures of the western nation is the reverence in which women are held and the gentle consideration with which they are treated.

He says, with the dying Buddha, "Work out your own salvation. I cannot help you. No man can help you. Help

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yourself." Harmony and peace, and not dissension, is his watchword.

The following story is one which he related recently regarding the practice of fault-finding among creeds:

"A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there to tell us whether the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake, we must take it for granted that it had eyes, and that it every day cleansed the waters of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it, with an energy that would give credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat—perhaps as much so as myself. Well, one day another frog that lived in the sea, came and fell into the well.

" 'Whence are you from?'

" 'I am from the sea.'

" 'The sea? How big is that? Is it as big as my well?' and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

" 'My friend,' says the frog of the sea, 'how do you compare the sea with your little well?'

"Then the frog took another leap and asked: 'Is your sea so big?'

" 'What nonsense you speak to compare the sea with your well.'

" 'Well, then,' said the frog of the well, 'nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a liar, so turn him out.'

"That has been the difficulty all the while.

"I am a Hindoo. I am sitting in my own little well, and thinking that the world is my well. The Christian sits in his little well and the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his well and thinks the whole world that. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish that purpose."

Last evening Swami Vive Kananda was given a reception at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley. It was a brilliant occasion and one which many persons availed themselves of in

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order to meet the learned and scholarly visitor. To-night to-morrow night and Saturday night he will lecture at the Unitarian church.

The *Evening News* of February 14 took its copy directly from the above, prefacing it, however, with a touch of sarcasm:

THE HINDOO RELIGION

As it is Explained by Swami Vive Kananda.

He is a High Grade Hindoo and Says Christianity is Not a Religion but Only a Creed and a Hindoo Offshoot.

Such christians as desire to become converted to the Hindoo religion can apply for the purpose at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley. A monk of that faith is the lady's guest, Swami Vive Kananda, who was one of the higher grades of ecclesiastics who made an impression upon the Chicago congress of religions.

From Canada's icy mountains, from Florida's sunny strands, where California's fountains roll down their golden sands; from many a Michigan river, from many a western plain, we've called him to deliver our souls from error's chain. What though our handsome city will make an artist smile; where every fancy pleases and only man is vile; in vain with lavish kindness great Vishnu's gifts are shown, the christian in his blindness is fighting for the bone.

[The above is a parody of certain lines of a Christian hymn by Bishop Heber, which went:

From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral strands,
Where Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver their land from error's chain.
What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases and only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.]

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The Hindoo religion, artistically speaking, is of the half tone order, soft, modified and mellowed by the receding centuries, a religion that appeals to the romantic and dreamy as in itself a dream. But its code of morals is essentially the same as that of the christian. Those with whom the various creeds have become a little stale, perhaps, might seek long before they would find anything more adaptable to their moral needs than the quieting creeds of the orient. But, seriously speaking, and placing implicit reliance upon Kananda's own statements, the Hindoo theologist is not here to do missionary work. [The remainder of this article is the same as that in the *Free Press*.]

II

Swamiji remained in Detroit from February 12 to 23, and then again from March 9 to 30. During these two visits he gave, in all, eight public lectures (not including those delivered in nearby towns) and spoke often at private gatherings. The material in the Detroit papers regarding these visits is voluminous. The battles that raged between the liberal and reactionary forces of Christianity through letters and editorials were long, complex and revealing as to the salutary upheaval that Swamiji created. "The power that emanated from this mysterious being," wrote Sister Christine, who attended every lecture Swamiji gave in Detroit, "was so great that one all but shrank from it. It was overwhelming." In this connection Mrs. Charles Erskine Scott Wood, the American poetess, better known as Sarah Bard Field, tells of an incident that was related to her by a Miss Marguerite Cook. Miss Cook, a teacher of German in a Detroit high school at the time of Swamiji's visit, attended one of his lectures at the Unitarian Church. Although of a stolid German nature and ordinarily unimpressionable, she was deeply struck by Swamiji's power and, for the first time in her life, felt an impulse to congratulate a speaker. Shaking hands with Swamiji after his lecture, she felt suddenly overwhelmed and at a loss for words. Swamiji held her hand for several moments. "I shall never forget his searching look," she told Mrs. Wood many years later. "I was so aware of his greatness and holiness that I couldn't bear to wash my hand for three days!" It is little wonder, considering Swamiji's effect upon his audience, that the city was in an uproar.

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Mrs. Wood, whose family lived in Detroit in 1894, also tells us, quoting her father, that for weeks one could not pick up a daily paper without seeing the name, Swami Vivekananda. Only a child at the time, Mrs. Wood remembers that her father, a stern Baptist, was scornful of Detroit's uninhibited excitement over Swamiji. Surfeited with reading about and hearing about the heathen monk (being a friend of the Bagley family, he must have heard a great deal), he protested by appearing one morning at the breakfast table with a towel wrapped turban-wise around his head and sonorous syllables in imitation of Sanscrit chanting issuing from his mouth. (It was a protest unheeded by his small daughter who in later life has become an ardent Vedantin.)

It will not be possible in this narrative to reproduce in its entirety every editorial and letter which was written under the impact of Swamiji's presence in Detroit, but I hope at least to tell of them all, insofar as they serve as an index to the various popular reactions and their developments.

Reports from the *Detroit Free Press* of four of the lectures which Swamiji gave during his first stay in Detroit were made available in the *Vedanta Kesari* of February 1924, and subsequently in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works." The story of how these reports came to light after thirty years is, I believe, one that is worth telling. In 1908 the clippings from the *Free Press* of February, 1894, were sent to Swami Brahmananda by Mrs. Mary C. Funke, one of Swamiji's most ardent Detroit followers, who later became his disciple. The closing paragraph of the letter which accompanied the clippings and which was printed in the *Vedanta Kesari* reads: "Dear Swami, I am enclosing the newspaper clippings of fifteen years ago, for I think they may be of interest to you. They are priceless to me and cannot be duplicated. I trust that you will not consider it selfish in me to ask you to return them, but at your leisure. I have so few mementos of him and you have the Math, his room, and the sacred spot under the Bel tree. Please keep them as long as you wish. . . ."

Thirteen years later, while cleaning out an old catch-all chest of drawers at the Ramakrishna Math in Madras, Swami Ashokananda came across a copy of Mary Funke's letter together with typed-out copies of the *Detroit Free Press* clippings. Recognizing the value of these treasures, the Swami rescued them from oblivion and forthwith gave them to the editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*. Thus it is that we have not had to wait until now for those excellent reports of some of the most

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fiery and inspiring lectures that Swamiji gave in America—the lectures of which Sister Christine later wrote: "Was it possible to hear and feel this and ever be the same again? All one's values were changed. The seed of spirituality was planted to grow and grow throughout the years until it inevitably reached fruition."

Swamiji gave his first lecture in Detroit on Wednesday evening, February 14, at the Unitarian church. In recalling it Mrs. Mary C. Funke is quoted in "The Life" as having said: "The large edifice was literally packed and the Swami received an ovation. I can see him yet as he stepped upon the platform, a regal, majestic figure, vital, forceful, dominant, and at the first sound of the wonderful voice, a voice all music—now like the plaintive minor strain of an Eolian harp, again, deep, vibrant, resonant—there was a hush, a stillness that could almost be felt, and the vast audience breathed as one man."

The text of the *Detroit Free Press* report of this lecture is given in full in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" under the title "India." The headlines which accompanied the report, however, are not reproduced in "The Complete Works," and are well worth quoting here:

MOST MORAL NATION

Vive Kananda States He So Considers India.

Though in Bondage Its Spirituality Endures.

Eloquent Address by the Eastern Brother.

Tonight He will Speak on "Hindoo Philosophy."

These words, "Most Moral Nation," were fighting ones to at least one member of the Christian clergy, as were two paragraphs of the text itself which I shall quote from Volume VIII as a help to the reader's memory:

"It seems somewhat singular that the eastern monk who is so outspoken in his disapproval of missionary labor on the part of the Christian church in India (where, he affirms, the morality is the highest in the world) should have been introduced by Bishop Ninde, who in June will depart for China in the interest for foreign missions.

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The bishop expects to remain away until December, but if he should stay longer he will go to India."

Further along in the article Swamiji is quoted as having said:

"There is something Christ-like in the humility of the people to endure the stings and arrows of outraged fortune [sic], the while the soul is advancing toward the brighter goal. Such a country has no need of Christian missionaries to 'preach ideas,' for theirs is a religion that makes men gentle, sweet, considerate and affectionate toward all God's creatures, whether man or beast. Morally, said the speaker, India is head and shoulders above the United States or any other country on the globe. Missionaries would do well to come there and drink of the pure waters, and see what a beautiful influence upon a great community have the lives of the multitude of good and holy men."

This was the first bombshell that Swamiji dropped in Detroit. The lecture was quoted in the *Evening News,* the *Tribune* and the *Journal* as well as in the *Free Press,* and there was probably no literate person in the city who was not now aware of the fact that Christian missionaries, for all their talk, were not doing any too well in India. Although the other reports of the lecture were, for the most part, repetitious of that in the *Free Press,* the *Tribune* of February 15 adds considerably to our knowledge of what Swamiji said and helps to explain some of the subsequent criticisms. With the exception of those portions that are repetitious of the *Free Press* report, and which I have omitted, the *Tribune* covered the lecture as follows:

HAD TO ENTERTAIN

Kananda Tells of the Hospitality of the Hindu.

He is Bound to Guard Against Selfishness Above All Things.

The Famous Monk Addresses an Interested Audience at Unity Church—Facts about the People of India Told by an Indian in the Purest English.

Last evening a good sized audience had the privilege of seeing and listening to the famous Hindu Monk of the Brahmo Samaj, Swami Vive Kananda, as he lectured at the

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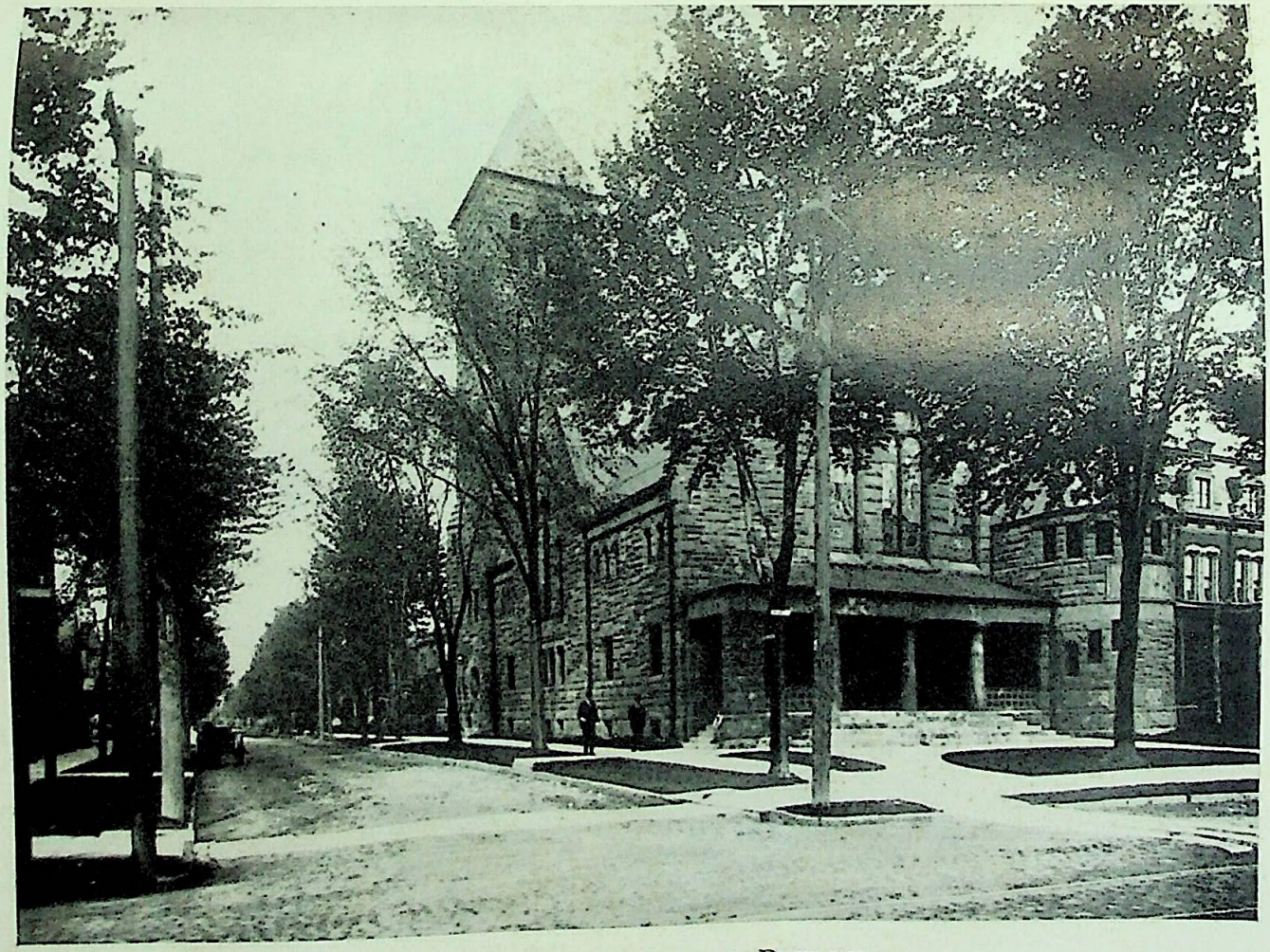

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, DETROIT

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Unitarian Church under the auspices of the Unity Club. He appeared in native costume and made with his handsome face and stalwart figure a distinguished appearance. His eloquence held the audience in rapt attention and brought out applause at frequent intervals. He spoke of the "Manners and Customs of India" and presented the subject in the most perfect English. He said they did not call their country India nor themselves Hindus. Hindostan was the name of the country and they were Brahmans. In ancient times they spoke Sanscrit. In that language the reason and meaning of a word was explained and made quite evident but now that is all gone. Jupiter in Sanscrit meant "Father in Heaven." All the languages of northern India were now practically the same, but if he should go into the southern part of that country he could not converse with the people. In the words father, mother, sister, brother, etc., the Sanscrit gave very similar pronunciations. This and other facts leads him to think we all come from the common stock, Aryans. Nearly all branches of this race have lost their identity.

There were four castes, the priests, the landlords and military people, the trades people and the artisans, laborers and servants. In the first three castes the boys at the ages of ten, eleven and thirteen respectively are placed in the hands of professors of universities and remain with them until thirty, twenty-five and twenty years old, respectively. . . . In ancient times both boys and girls were instructed, but now only the boys are favored. An effort, however, is being made to rectify the long-existing wrong. A good share of the philosophy and laws of the land is the work of women during the ancient times, before barbarians started to rule the land. In the eyes of the Hindu the woman now has her rights. She holds her own and has the law on her side.

When the student returns from college he is allowed to marry and have a household. Husband and wife must bear the work and both have their rights. In the military caste the daughters oftentimes can choose their husbands, but in all other cases all arrangements are made by the parents. There is a constant effort now being made to remedy infant marriage. The marriage ceremony is very beautiful, each touches the heart of the other and they swear before God and

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the assemblage that they will prove faithful to each other. No man can be a priest until he marries. When a man attends public worship he is always attended by his wife. In his worship the Hindu performs five ceremonies, worship of his God, of his forefathers, of the poor, of the dumb animals, and of learning. As long as a Hindu has anything in the house a guest must never want. When he is satisfied then the children, then father and mother partake. They are the poorest nation in the world, yet except in times of famine no one dies of hunger. Civilization is a great work. But in comparison the statement is made that in England one in every 400 is a drunkard, while in India the proportion is one to every million. A description was given of the ceremony of burning the dead. No publicity is made except in the case of some great nobleman. After a fifteen days' fast gifts are given by the relatives in behalf of the forefathers to the poor or for the formation of some institution. On moral matters they stand head and shoulders above all other nations.

Bishop Ninde, a Methodist Episcopalian, who had introduced Swamiji with the prayer that the heathens would someday see the light and who had evidently been under the impression that he was going to hear entertaining descriptions of heathen customs and, perhaps, praise, direct or implied, for the work of Christian missions, had received a severe shock. Before his very eyes, on the same platform with him, Swamiji had captured the audience, extolled the religion of the Hindu people and declared that India was a moral nation in no need of Christian missionaries! The bishop was shaken and, very likely, in serious difficulties with his church. A hasty explanation was in order, and directly following Swamiji's first lecture in Detroit he penned a letter to the editor of the *Detroit Free Press*, which appeared on February 16 as follows:

FROM FREE PRESS READERS.

Vive Kananda's First Lecture.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

In referring to the above lecture, your issue of yesterday says: "It seemed somewhat singular that the eastern monk,

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who is so outspoken in his disapproval of missionary labor on the part of the Christian church in India (where, he affirms, the morality is the highest in the world) should have been introduced by Bishop Ninde, who in June will depart for China in the interest of foreign Christian missions."

It is due to myself and to the Christian public who believe in missions that I should claim the privilege of making an explanation. I was courteously invited by friends in whom I have the fullest confidence to introduce the lecturer to his audience, with the assurance that nothing would be said that could be at all offensive to Christian ears. I inferred that we should be treated to an entertaining description of the manners and customs of one of the most interesting countries on the globe, and without any manifest religious bias. It was suggested that the introduction, coming from me, would be appropriate, as I was, perhaps, the only person in the city who had visited India. I felt no hesitation under the circumstances in rendering so simple a courtesy to a gentleman of such acknowledged ability and learning as Mr. Kananda. Imagine my surprise, however, as the lecture proceeded, when I saw it to be a studied effort to magnify the virtues of the Hindoos and discount the morals of Christian nations, with the evident purpose of showing the impertinence and uselessness of Christian missions. Had I foreseen the drift of the lecture, and especially some of its more caustic and unfriendly references, I should have felt obliged by simple self-respect to decline the honor of presenting the speaker.

But the lecture, though able and interesting, instead of weakening my faith in the value of Christian missions in India, has strongly confirmed my conviction of their importance and ultimate triumph. The lecture from first to last was a scathing arraignment of modern Brahmanism (the accepted religion of India to-day) from the view point of a professed Hindoo reformer.

One who has been on the ground cannot be misled by rose-colored exhibits of Hindoo morality. The lecturer stated with emphasis that drunkenness was unknown among the Hindoos, when to the writer's personal knowledge the drinking habit had become quite recently so rife among the

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natives in a portion of western India that a firm of Hindoo merchants in Bombay engaged one of our unemployed missionaries to go through the country in company with a Brahman to lecture on temperance and offer the pledge. In fact, the moral abominations that prevail throughout India to-day, and under the sanctions of the accepted religion, are too notorious to be successfully denied.

I have no doubt that Mr. Kananda and a few others of like spirit are doing their best to counteract the ever-downward tendency and restore the simpler yet greatly inadequate faiths of primitive Hindooism; yet I am firm in the conviction, despite his denial, that such beneficent reforms as have come about in these latter times in the social and moral condition of India have sprung, not from impulses within the body of Hindooism, but from the direct and indirect influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that the work which the toilsome and self-denying missionaries are doing to-day in India should be the subject, not of sneering or critical animadversion, but of warm and unstinted praise. The success of our Methodist missions in central India in making converts is simply marvelous. It indicates with unerring certainty the speedy breaking away of great masses from the old superstitions and their reception of a revealed religion that will satisfy all their needs and regenerate, as no other power can, that ancient and noble race.

I repeat what I said in introducing the distinguished speaker, that, "while I differ very widely from him in my conception of the religious idea and religious duty, yet I long and pray for the day when, in the clearer light which God's spirit may vouchsafe to each one of us, the people of all lands and all races may see eye to eye and be perfectly joined together in the service of a common divine Redeemer."

Detroit, February 15, 1894 W. X. NINDE.

The war was on. Henceforth the newspapers fairly bristled with letters and editorials attacking and defending Swamiji, and one can imagine the discussions that must have taken place in the drawing rooms, in the church parlors and in the club rooms of the city. Members of orthodox, or what Swamiji would call "blue-nose,"

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Christianity were happy with the bishop's letter, and on February 24 the *Michigan Christian Advocate,* a weekly published in Detroit, printed it with the following introduction:

A HINDOO IN DETROIT.

The distinguished Hindoo monk, Swamie Vive Kananda, lectured two or three times in Detroit last week, praising the religion of Buddha and making numerous "cute little jabs at the Christian religion," as the daily papers said. But the cunning heathen was careful to avoid any comparison between the social condition of the people in his own land and those to whom he was speaking, though he boldly animadverted upon the great missionary movements of Christianity and sought to belittle and disparage them as other heathen in America have recently been doing. As Bishop Ninde was induced to introduce the speaker the first evening, he wisely made a very satisfactory and instructive explanation through the *Free Press* next day: [Here followed the full text of the bishop's letter.]

Bishop Ninde's "satisfactory and instructive explanation" was made good use of by Swamiji's missionary opponents. In November, 1894, the *Homiletic Review,* an organ of the orthodox Christian churches, printed an article in defense of Christian missionaries in India. The writer set the stage for his attack on Swamiji by the following interpretation of the Detroit incident:

. . . Vivekananda, acting under the auspices of hospitable friends in Detroit, gave a series of lectures on the superiority of Hinduism, which created no little stir in religious and antireligious circles. He spoke repeatedly in Unitarian churches, and he received many courtesies also from men of what are known as the orthodox creeds. On one occasion he was very courteously introduced to his audience by Bishop Ninde of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But so contemptuous and bitter was the attack upon Christianity and Christian missions which followed, that the good Bishop felt compelled to apologize through the press for the position in

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which his Hindu friend had placed him as a minister and a bishop in the Christian Church.

Needless to say, when on Thursday evening, February 15, Swamiji gave his second lecture, the good bishop did not introduce him. And sad to say, although the public crowded into the Unitarian Church, the Detroit press had been intimidated by the bishop's repudiation of his Hindu friend. Methodism was strong in the city, and Bishop Ninde, a stalwart figure, was well known and highly respected among the orthodox. Thus the reports of Swamiji's second lecture, "Hindu Philosophy," are meager and, with one exception, misrepresentative.

The *Detroit Journal* of February 16 took a safe stand beside the bishop, whom its reporter had interviewed:

SCORED CHRISTIANITY

Vive Kananda Tells about the Trouble it Has Caused in India.

Bishop Ninde did not introduce the Hindoo monk, Vive Kananda, last evening when he was to deliver his second lecture at the Unitarian church. In fact, the bishop had ceased to take any stock in the Hindoo, because of his propensity for attacking the Christian religion, as well as for what he considered his untruthfulness as displayed in his lecture on Wednesday evening. The bishop has traveled in India extensively himself, and in an interview with the Journal after the lecture said the monk had evidently been talking for the purpose of creating an impression. If a more worldly man than the bishop had been describing the monk's lecture he would have said he was "talking through his hat," as that is just what the bishop meant.

"For instance," said the bishop, "he told us there was absolutely no drunkenness in India; that one might travel all through the country without seeing an intoxicated man. Now, I know better, for I have been there and have observed with my own eyes to what an extent the drink habit has taken hold of the natives. Why, it is positively a fact that English liquor merchants have been sending men through-

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out India for the express purpose of educating the natives to drink intoxicating liquors, and from my observations I should say they were very apt pupils. I could recite many instances of degradation caused by the drink habit if it was necessary."

The monk's lecture last evening was on "Hindoo Philosophy," but those who expected to learn something from the lecture must have been greatly disappointed, for the whole lecture was made up of pointed little cracks at the Christian religion. He dwelt at some length on what he designated the trouble and misery his people had experienced by the introduction of Christianity into India. His references to "Hindoo Philosophy" were so very few that they could hardly be distinguished from his attacks upon the Christian religion. He thought it only an idle dream to think of all the nations of the earth having the same religious view. He said finally that Buddhists had sent out the first missionaries, and they are the only people who can say they have converted millions without shedding a drop of blood.

It is interesting to notice, in connection with the attacks against Swamiji, that those who opposed him, although often men of high standing in the community, almost invariably betrayed a confusion of mind either in their style of writing or in their multiple self-contradictions. Bishop Ninde, for instance, not only misquoted Swamiji regarding drunkenness in India, but attributed its existence to the beguilement of a *Christian nation*! But in whatever muddle the bishop managed to get himself, the fact remained, as Swamiji had pointed out, that the alcoholic Hindu was an extreme rarity.

The *Detroit Free Press* of February 16 was as cautious as the *Journal* in its report on Swamiji's second lecture. It was from the following article of February 16 that the *Michigan Christian Advocate* picked up the phrase, "cute little jabs at the Christian religion":

"HINDOO PHILOSOPHY."

Another Large Audience Listens to Swami Vive Kananda.

The second lecture of the Hindoo monk, Swami Vive Kananda, was given last evening at the Unitarian church to

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a large and very appreciative audience. The expectation of the audience that the speaker would enlighten them regarding "Hindoo Philosophy," as the lecture was entitled, was gratified to only a limited extent. Allusions were made to the philosophy of Buddha, and the speaker was applauded when he said that Buddhism was the first missionary religion of the world, and that it had secured the largest number of converts without the shedding of a drop of blood; but he did not tell his audience anything about the religion or philosophy of Buddha. He made a number of cute little jabs at the Christian religion, and alluded to the trouble and misery that had been caused by its introduction into heathen countries, but he skillfully avoided any comparison between the social condition of the people in his own land and that of the people to whom he was speaking. In a general way he said the Hindoo philosophers taught from a lower truth to a higher; whereas, a person accepting a newer Christian doctrine is asked and expected to throw his former belief all away and accept the newer in its entirety. "It is an idle dream when all of us will have the same religious views," said he. "No emotion can be produced except by clashing elements acting upon the mind. It is the revulsion of change, the new light, the presentation of the new to the old, that elicits sensation."

Fortunately the *Detroit Tribune* consistently upheld Swamiji, and thus in its report of February 16 we are able to get some idea of his lecture on "Hindu Philosophy." Although the *Tribune* reporter seems to have taken somewhat sketchy notes, his account was unbiased and gives ample proof that the lecture by no means consisted of "cute little jabs at the Christian religion":

HINDU PHILOSOPHY

The Subject of Kananda's Talk to the Unity Club Last Night

The Brahman monk, Swami Vive Kananda, again lectured last evening at the Unitarian church, his topic being "Hindu Philosophy." The speaker dealt for a time with gen-

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eral philosophy and metaphysics, but said that he would devote the lecture to that part pertaining to religion. There is a sect that believes in a soul, but are agnostic in relation to God. Buddahism [sic] was a great moral religion, but they could not live long without believing in a god. Another sect known as the giants [Jains] believe in the soul, but not in the moral government of the country. There were several millions of this sect in India. Their priests and monks tie a handkerchief over their faces, believing if their hot breath comes in contact with man or beast death will ensue.

Among the orthodox, all believe in the revelation. Some think every word in the Bible comes directly from God. The stretching of the meaning of a word would perhaps do in most religions, but in that of the Hindus they have the Sanscrit, which always retains the full meaning and reasons of the word.

The distinguished Oriental thought there was a sixth sense far greater than any of the five we know we possess. It was the truth of revelation. A man may read all the books on religion in the world and yet be the greatest blackguard in the country. Revelation means later reports of spiritual discoveries.

The second position some take is a creation without beginning or end. Suppose there was a time when the world did not exist; what was God doing then? To the Hindus the creation was only one of forms. One man is born with a healthy body, is of good family and grows up a godly man. Another is born with a maimed and crooked body and develops into a wicked man and pays the penalty. Why must a just and holy god create one with so many advantages and the other with disadvantages? The person has no choice. The evildoer has a consciousness of his guilt. The difference between virtue and vice was expounded. If God willed all things there would be an end to all science. How far can man go down? Is it possible for man to go back to brute again?

Kananda was glad he was a Hindu. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans several thousand [Jews] settled in India. When the Persians were driven from their country by the Arabs several thousand found refuge in the same

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country and none were molested. The Hindus believe all religions are true, but theirs antedates all others. Missionaries are never molested by the Hindus. The first English missionaries were prevented from landing in that country by English and it was a Hindu that interceded for them and gave them the first hand. Religion is that which believes in all. Religion was compared to the blind men and the elephant. Each man felt of a special part and from it drew his conclusions of what an elephant was. Each was right in his way and yet all were needed to form a whole. Hindu philosophers say "truth to truth, lower truth to higher." It is an idle dream of those who think that all will at some time think alike, for that would be the death of religion. Every religion breaks up into little sects, each claiming to be the true one and all the others wrong. Persecution is unknown in Buddahism. They sent out the first missionaries and are the only ones who can say they have converted millions without the shedding of a single drop of blood. Hindus, with all their faults and superstitions, never persecute. The speaker wanted to know how it was the christians allowed such iniquities as are everywhere present in christian countries.

Obviously Swamiji's "jabs" were directed for the most part toward the contention that the whole world must become Christian or be doomed. Such "jabs," even when embodied in a long lecture on Hindu philosophy and spoken without rancor, entered the orthodox mind as lightning thrusts, obliterating everything else that had been said. Often in a reading of Swamiji's lectures his pointed criticisms of the contemporary religious scene appear to constitute but a small part of his message, and one can only imagine the power behind his words when he spoke them from the platform—a power not of voice but of spirit, a force that drove his rebukes deep into the very soul of those for whom they were intended and brought forth howls of protest.

But nothing could have exposed the worst aspects of Christian orthodoxy more effectively than its adherents' denunciation of Swamiji. It was perhaps largely through the process of self-exposure on the part of bigotry that his lecture tour rid America of its most pernicious aspects. He rarely made any rejoinder to his critics. He did not

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have to. Shortly following Bishop Ninde's repudiation of "Mr. Kananda," for instance, three long and forceful letters ridiculing and reprimanding the bishop appeared in the daily newspapers. The first of these, dated February 16, appeared in the *Free Press* of February 17 and is quoted at some length as follows:

Bishop Ninde and Kananda.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

In The Free Press of Friday Bishop Ninde offers an explanation by way of apology for having been induced under what he seems to construe as false pretenses, to act as chairman and introduce the Brahmin Monk Kananda to a Unitarian church audience. It would now seem from the tone of his letter, that the good Methodist bishop feels as if he had "fallen from grace," and now repents of the disgrace, as he would probably put it if he expressed his innermost convictions. His acceptance and fulfillment of the duty with such good grace, won much admiration from all liberal minded people, many Christians included. It is lamentable that he did not have the grace and moral courage to let well enough alone, even though his private views conflicted with those of the Brahmin. . . .

Bishop Ninde again errs when he attempts to convey the impression in his letter that he was supposed to be the only man in Detroit who had visited India. He should know that this is simply nonsense. But a few days ago Frederick Stearns gave a lecture in the city upon his travels in India, and the bishop well knows that there are scores of others here who have seen as much of that wonderful country as he has, and the public are not ignorant of that fact. The writer was present at the first and last lectures of Kananda, and saw the bishop wince and squirm at the mild mannered, though telling rebuke of "Christian" methods and intolerance with not only the alleged heathen, but with different "Christian" denominations, among themselves. . . . The discourse of [Kananda] was indeed "caustic," as the bishop says, but not "unfriendly," as he further states. . . . He fails to recognize the liberal, generous and holy spirit with which it was conveyed. . . .

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The bishop furthermore affirms that whatever social and moral conditions exist in India "have not sprung from impulses within the body of Hindooism, but from the direct and indirect influences of the gospel of Jesus Christ." This the bishop knows to be false if he is versed in ancient history, as he should be. The fundamental morals and virtues of Buddha, Brahma, Confucius and other moral reformers were known long before Christ's coming. Human brotherhood and the godlike in man were taught ages before. If Bishop Ninde is going to the orient as a true missionary he will have to learn the chief lesson of "God in man" before he can truthfully preach the glad tidings of a gospel of peace and love. . . .

O. P. DELDOC.

The second long letter which was written in reproach of Bishop Ninde and in defense of Swamiji was published in the *Free Press* of February 18. It was signed "Lover of Fair Play" and expressed, for the most part, the same sentiments and emphasized the same points as did the above. The following salient passages, however, should be quoted:

. . . The fundamental principle of the Hindoo religion is the absolute tolerance of all other religions, and it strikes me that the learned bishop has displayed a great deal of intolerance in advocating his own cause. He states that he inferred, when called upon to introduce the speaker, that nothing would be said that showed any religious bias. May a layman be permitted to ask why should we not have one Hindoo missionary among us when we send hundreds to India? Is not turn about fair play? What, then, about the quality of the distinguished brother's moral teachings? He says we should live up to the doctrine that all self is bad and all non-self is good. Is not such teaching grand and ennobling? Is it not as beneficial to poor human nature as the golden rule? The Hindoo religion being the most spiritual in the world, goes further than the golden rule. It teaches its followers to treat your neighbor better than you would expect to be treated. Can anyone question such morality as this? . . .

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. . . It seems strange that the bishop should resent the expression of his views from the visitor. Do not the missionaries of the church he so ably represents intrude their views upon the benighted heathen, who in their five daily worships show that the unselfishness of the Hindoo religion is something beautiful to contemplate? . . .

. . . I know full well that Vive Kananda will not reply to the bishop's letter because his theory is that silence is golden when a religious controversy is impending. He says there should be no quarreling among the representatives of the creeds, for he who casts a reflection upon another creed casts a slur upon his own faith. He casts no reflection upon the Christian religion. What he said was that different people have different religions, and that is well. The Christian religion may answer the needs of certain people, but the Hindoo religion answers better the needs of the people of India, because it teaches them higher doctrines of morality than other nations are prepared to receive. . . . The sublime religion of the Hindoo we are unprepared for and therefore the Christian religion answers every purpose. This is a cutthroat generation and the gentle doctrine of the divinity of non-self is too far in the future for us. . . .

The third letter appeared in the *Detroit Journal* of February 20 and was signed "E. J." It read in part as follows:

. . . It would have done more credit to our Christianity for the bishop to have accepted without comment Vive Kananda's assertion that there is comparatively little drunkenness in India than to have proved its falsity by admitting that a Christian nation, professing a civilization and a religion far in advance of that of Buddha, introduced that degrading vice to a temperate and religious people, and spread it broadcast there through insatiate love of gain. It is a more bitter reflection upon our boasted Christianity than any Vive Kananda made. . . .

As for the "cracks at the Christian religion," the sting lay in their truth. This Hindoo knows where to find the weak joints in our armor. We ought to be grateful to him for the hits he didn't make. Do our missionaries treat

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foreign—pagan, we like to call them—religions as tenderly and inoffensively as Vive Kananda treated ours? He was not here to convert us ; indeed, in his last lecture he expressly disclaimed any such purpose. . . .

To tell the truth, his broad liberality, that recognizes in every human soul the effort toward freedom (his synonym of our "salvation") and light, and makes that effort religion, irrespective and independent of creed or dogma, shames us all. The spectacle of a Methodist bishop introducing a Buddhist monk in a Unitarian church to an audience composed of Christians, Jews and Gentiles, looked like a move toward the breaking down of the barriers of sectarianism. It seems a pity the bishop thought necessary to excuse his commendable part in it, to the extent of a quarter column of solid nonpareil in the morning papers, because a Brahmin of the Buddhists didn't preach orthodox Christianity.

It can be safely assumed that a large percentage of the Detroit population both read and approved these letters. Bishop Ninde in his denunciation of Swamiji had done nothing but play directly into the hands of the liberals and strengthen their position.

A further point that Swamiji's defenders should have clarified was that in speaking against the Christian missionaries after having been introduced by the biship he had not overstepped the bounds of courtesy. Bishop Ninde, probably under the impression that Swamiji, like Mazoomdar and other "enlightened" Hindus, looked to Christianity for the salvation of India, had introduced him with a fervent prayer for the day "when people of all lands and all races may see eye to eye and be perfectly joined together in the service of a common divine Redeemer"—that is, in the service of Jesus Christ. Swamiji's subject was "Manners and Customs in India," and he could not, in giving a true picture of his country, avoid referring to the Christian missionaries who had so misrepresented her to the world and who had done her such untold harm. But while his purpose in appearing on the platform was not to observe the social amenities, had Bishop Ninde omitted his prayer, Swamiji might in courtesy to him have softened his blows. As it was, the bishop had forfeited his right to such consideration. Because of the prayer, it became incumbent upon Swamiji to make his points all the more clear and telling, to correct all misconceptions regarding his country and, above

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all, to disabuse his audience of the notion that Christianity was India's only hope.

III

There were two misconceptions regarding India prevalent in the 1890's. While on the one hand she was maligned as a land of immorality, idolatry and superstition and in crying need of Christian missionaries, on the other hand she was lauded as a realm of mystery and marvel where "Mahatmas" performed wonderful feats of occult power and telepathically communicated cosmic secrets to the elect. This latter view resulted in a kind of delirium in which occultism, spirituality, superscience and the turban were hopelessly confused. It was in the throes of such confusion that the *Evening News* of February 14 had greeted Swamiji on his arrival in Detroit with the following article:

GIVE US SOME MIRACLES.

It may sound vulgar, but it is not improper for Detroit to insist, now that it has gotten one of these wonderful East Indian mahatmas or priests, or whatever they are called, in its social grip, that he either "put up or shut up." During the past 10 or 15 years the people of christian lands have been asked to believe that there exists among some of the upper casts of India a profundity of esoteric wisdom and a knowledge of the laws of nature which, in comparison with our occidental ignorance, borders on the infinite. The mystifying tricks of the eastern fakirs have been long recognized as the best specimens of sleight-of-hand work that exist anywhere in the world, and these tricks have been used as the foundation for stories of wonder-working that places the doings of the adepts of India on a par with the miracles of Jesus of Nazareth.

A series of articles is now running in the Arena, written by a man who claims to have seen all that he tells about, tending to prove that the eastern adepts have gotten so far on the inner side of things in this world that they have almost complete control over all the powers of nature. Large trees

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from 40 to 75 feet high are grown before man's eyes in a few minutes and the spectators are permitted to climb into the branches of them ; rocks and mountains which have stood for centuries are made to disappear and then to reappear; thunderbolts leap from the tips of the fingers of the mahatmas and do what destruction the owner of the finger wills, and other works are done which show that the performers are possessed of powers divine.

Now if all this wonder-working were advanced to show how much more skillful in legerdemain the easterns are over the westerns, we could well confess the superiority and let it go at that; but the claim is that it all shows that the adepts have pushed nearer the center of things than we have, and that it shows how very low and childish our boasted civilization is. It is claimed that the religious knowledge of the adepts is luminosity itself compared with our poor christian paganism.

The obvious answer to all these claims of miracle working is that if they were true, the adepts would come west and do some missionary work by showing the christians what the eastern knowledge would do. The adepts answer this by saying that they have a secret reason why they will not do this. But the world's fair brought a small swarm of these people to our shores, and one of the most celebrated of them is in Detroit at the present moment. The present moment, then, is the time to give notice to Swami Vive Kananda that this great opportunity has arrived to prove that all that has been said about his wonderful miracle-working powers is true.

Swami Vive Kananda will talk at the unitarian church, but will he do nothing but talk? There are thousands of Americans who can talk better and longer than he can. They can say sweeter things and say them in more elegant form, but they cannot grow a pine tree before the eyes of 10,000 people. They cannot pick up Belle Isle and sink it in Lake St. Clair and then put it back again. If Swami Vive Kananda declines to do some of these things in addition to saying sweet things, he will injure his boasted religion of superiority more than he will help it. If his religion is better than ours, it surely does not show among the millions of the people of India. It does not show in any wonders seen by

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western eyes. Where, then, does it show? Answer: As yet only in sensational stories of travelers which thousands of Americans have swallowed. Will Kananda do something handsome while in Detroit?

In the tense atmosphere of Detroit no criticism of Swamiji was let pass without public rejoinder. Through the letter columns of the *Detroit Journal* of February 16, one of Swamiji's most articulate defenders, a well-known writer by the name of O. P. Deldoc, whose retort to Bishop Ninde has been reproduced above, was the first to give the *Evening News* a staunch reply:

FROM THE MAIL BAG

Mysteries and Miracles.

I read with no little surprise and disgust an editorial in the Evening News of February 14, headed, "Give us Some Miracles," said article being called forth on account of the appearance in Detroit of Swami Vive Kananda, the Brahmin monk, who edified and delighted, not only the clergy of all denominations, but all who heard him in the parliament of religions at Chicago. His candor, simplicity and marvelous mentality are only exceeded by his earnest efforts towards the unity of religion and the brotherhood of man.

The editorial in substance calls upon Vive Kananda, whom it styles "one of those wonderful East Indian mahatmas, to shut up or put up," and challenges him to show some of the "mystifying tricks" alleged to have been witnessed by travelers in India, special attention being called to the articles written by Dr. Hensholdt, now being published in the Arena. The editorial sneeringly and sarcastically alludes to these "doings of the adepts of India" as professedly "being on a par with the miracles of Jesus of Nazareth," yet carries the inference that they are but "tricks of fakirs." The article concludes by avowing that "Kananda will talk, but do nothing but talk," and because he does not produce any of the so-called miracles "he will injure his boasted religion of superiority more than he will help it."

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The writer of that editorial ought to know that none more stoutly declare that there are no miracles, never was such a thing as a miracle, that nothing is supernatural, more than the "wise men of the east," or the intelligent recorder or traveler, familiar with the Orient. What the East Indians do claim, and what theosophists and all profound thinkers claim, is that the learned of that country have a better and purer knowledge of the hidden forces of nature, of spirituality, of practical humanity, of religious mysteries, and the occult generally, than has been revealed to many in the western world.

They have a better knowledge of the Arians, earth's earlier ages, and of pure Sanscrit literature, including the lost arts and sciences of modern times, and also of the fundamental basis of all religions. The wise of India are no more responsible for the superstitions, the pretensions, or for those who err and sin, than the good of our own land are responsible for the mistakes and wickedness of the present day. Why call an honest exponent of a pure and simple religion of charity and humanity, to account for the errors of some of his fellows of that vast and varied country, whose total population some self-styled Christians delight in dubbing "heathen"? Shall we send our sectarian missionaries to his land, and kick him out of ours because forsooth! he can't hoodoo us with some hocus-pocus tricks, or show us what never existed—a miracle?

Christ when in the flesh, was thus importuned by the ignorant rabble, who disbelieved his holy name, and charged him with being an imposter, and who was finally spat upon and put to death by the same bigoted, intolerant mob, who only cried: "Crucify him!" When they jeered him to scorn, and cried, "Show us a miracle," he calmly and meekly rebuked them, saying, "Ye would not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would ye believe though one arose from the dead." It is only the ignorant who expect or seek for the miraculous.

The adepts of India or of any other land do not pretend to do marvels; they only by a superior spirituality gained by long fasting, long study, long crucifying of the lusts of the flesh, long meditation upon "nature's finer forces," are

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enabled to do what would fill the minds of the superstitious with awe and wonder. All scientists familiar with that wonderful country declare the natives experts or adepts in hypnotic power, and for unknown ages they have held the key to electricity, and many other of nature's marvels. India was very old before our nation was born, and her savants have forgotten more than we with our boasted civilization know.

If Swami Vive Kananda succeeds in expounding a gospel of peace, of purity, of self-sacrifice and brotherly love; if he succeeds in opening the blind eyes of bigotry, and in unstopping the deaf ears of the intolerant, and shows the professed Christian that even a heathen has some virtues which Christians lack, and more than all if he softens the strong heart of humanity, which he already seems qualified to do, his mission among us will not be in vain.

O. P. DELDOC.

Another retort to the *Evening News* appeared much later in a letter to the editor of the *Free Press,* in which the author, "having pursued the published reports of Swami Vive Kananda's course of lectures," dutifully set himself to point out the errors of Swamiji's logic. The result, as might be expected, was total confusion, with which I will not burden the reader. The letter concludes, however, with the following more lucid paragraph:

> But despite the Hindoo's errors there is so much that is good and true in his tenets and their application that the self-professing Christian may well profit by. For certain it is that few, indeed, of any "nation or people, or tongue," can derive any substantial advantage or profit by the adoption of Christianity as at present taught and practically applied; which is but a travesty of the teachings of Christ and his immediate apostles and disciples; and the Hindoo teacher may well return the brutal and blasphemous cry recently hurled at him by certain professed Christians (?): "Give us some miracles."

But the most pertinent and conclusive reply to the editorial was given by Swamiji himself when the *Evening News,* more by way of

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self-justification than apology, printed on February 17 the following brief interview:

ONLY WONDERS WORKED.

No Miracles in the Pure Hindoo Religion.

"I cannot comply with the request of The News to work a miracle in proof of my religion," said Vive Kananda to a representative of this paper, after being shown The News editorial on the subject. "In the first place, I am no miracle worker, and in the second place the pure Hindoo religion I profess is not based on miracles. We do not recognize such a thing as miracles. There are wonders wrought beyond our five senses, but they are operated by some law. Our religion has nothing to do with them. Most of the strange things which are done in India and reported in the foreign papers are sleight-of-hand tricks or hypnotic illusions. They are not the performances of the wise men. These do not go about the country performing their wonders in the market places for pay. They can be seen and known only by those who seek to know the truth, and not moved by childish curiosity."

Thus the matter was settled. Later, the *Evening News* of February 20 was to boast at the end of a rather sour editorial:

The News has done the only sound service that has been done for the Detroit public and the occidental world in connection with this visit of the Hindu monk. It has wrested from highest Hindu authority testimony about the wonder-working that has been so persistently claimed for the mahatmas of the east. Kananda says that the truth of the Hindu faith does not rest on wonder-working. He makes no pretension either for himself or any of his countrymen on this line. He despises as much as any occidental can the tricks of the fakirs. Truth stands on its own feet. This testimony which The News has wrested from so high authority sweeps away the huge mass of claims that have been set

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up for the eastern mahatmas by such writers as Sinnet and Blavatski and the writer now running a series of articles in the Arena. The News appreciates Kananda, not as a popular fad, but because he has come and delighted us with the things that are valuable for their own sake.

It was, of course, not necessary to "wrest" a denunciation of miracle-working from Swamiji. With every lecture and every interview he gave—indeed, by his very presence—he established for all thinking people the distinction between true Eastern mysticism and mysterious occultism.

It is not surprising, however, in view of his extraordinary personality, that many people regarded him as a miracle-worker. Nor is it surprising that stories confirming this assumption spread far and wide. One such story was told me out of the memory of Mrs. Frances Bagley Wallace, and concerns the reception her grandmother, Mrs. Bagley, held for Swamiji. Mrs. Wallace writes: "I was only nine years old at the time, but I remember that after being locked in Grandfather's study at one end of the house, the Swami materialized in the center of the big parlor at the other end of the house where the guests were. When the prominent gentlemen who had locked him in the study and had pocketed the key returned and unlocked the door, there sat the Swami in the same position as he had been when they had locked him in there!" This story is not altogether incredible, for such materialization is not unknown. There is, for instance, an authentic story regarding Sri Ramakrishna, who, being at Dakshineswar temple, appeared at the same time in a city in East Bengal. What is difficult to believe, however, is that Swamiji would have submitted himself to such a test of his powers, or that he would have used those powers to entertain and astound his friends. Although Mrs. Wallace is definite regarding the authenticity of her memory, a skeptic might be inclined to consider that she had been too young at the time to discriminate between rumor and fact. But however that may be, the story at least proves that fascinating rumors were current regarding Swamiji. It may well have been such rumors that reached the skeptical ears of the editor of the *News* and prompted him to write his sarcastic editorial.

In any case, Swamiji, with one stroke, absolved India of "Mahatmaism" as well as "heathenism"—a stroke which neither the Theosophists nor the missionaries thanked him for.

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IV

By the time Swamiji gave his third lecture, "The Divinity of Man," at the Unitarian Church, on Saturday, February 17, the Detroit newspapers had recovered from their reticence and reported upon it at some length. The first two paragraphs of the report in the *Free Press* of February 18 have been quoted in "The Life" (fourth edition, page 335), and the next five paragraphs in Volume IV of "The Complete Works" under the title, "Is India a Benighted Country?". But although much of the following article will be familiar to the reader, I will nevertheless reproduce it in its entirety, for it gives so excellent a picture of both Swamiji and his Detroit audience. Moreover, so far as I know, the last half of this report has not hitherto been reprinted:

INDIVIDUAL INFINITY

Swami Vive Kananda's Lecture Last Evening.

Philosophy of Swedenborg from a Hindoo Source.

Fatalistic Qualities of the Ancient Indian Religion.

Unitarian Church Crowded to the Doors by Pleased Auditors.

Swami Vive Kananda, Hindoo philosopher and priest, concluded his series of lectures, or, rather, sermons, at the Unitarian church last night, speaking on "The Divinity of God" [sic]. In spite of the bad weather, the church was crowded almost to the doors half an hour before the eastern brother—as he likes to be called—appeared. All professions and business occupations were represented in the attentive audience—lawyers, judges, ministers of the gospel, merchants, a rabbi—not to speak of the many ladies who have by their repeated attendance and rapt attention shown a decided inclination to shower adulation upon the dusky visitor whose drawing-room attraction is as great as his ability in the rostrum.

The lecture last night was less descriptive than preced-

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ing ones, and for nearly two hours Vive Kananda wove a metaphysical texture on affairs human and divine, so logical that he made science appear like common sense. It was a beautiful logical garment that he wove, replete with as many bright colors and as attractive and pleasing to contemplate as one of the many-hued fabrics made by hand in his native land and scented with the most seductive fragrance of the Orient. This dusky gentleman uses poetical imagery as an artist uses colors, and the hues are laid on just where they belong, the result being somewhat bizarre in effect, and yet having a peculiar fascination. Kaleidoscopic were the swiftly succeeding logical conclusions, and the deft manipulator was rewarded for his efforts from time to time by enthusiastic applause.

The lecture was prefaced with the statement that the speaker had been asked many questions. A number of these he preferred to answer privately, but three he had selected, for reasons which would appear, to answer from the pulpit. They were:

"Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of the crocodiles?"

"Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of the juggernaut?"

"Do they burn widows with their husbands?"

The first question the lecturer treated in the vein that an American abroad would answer inquiries about Indians running around in the streets of New York and similar myths which are even to-day entertained by many persons on the continent. The statement was too ludicrous to give a serious response to it. When asked by certain well-meaning but ignorant people why they gave only female children to the crocodiles, he could only ironically reply that probably it was because they were softer and more tender and could be more easily masticated by the inhabitants of the rivers in the benighted country. Regarding the juggernaut legend the lecturer explained the old practice in the sacred city and remarked that possibly a few in their zeal to grasp the rope and participate in the drawing of the car slipped and fell and were so destroyed. Some such mishaps had been exaggerated into the distorted version from which the good people

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of other countries shrank with horror. Vive Kananda denied that the people burned widows. It was true, however, that widows had burned themselves. In the few cases where this had happened, they had been urged not to do so by the priests and holy men who were always opposed to suicide. Where the devoted widows insisted, stating that they desired to accompany their husbands in the transformation that had taken place, they were obliged to submit to the fiery test. That is, they thrust their hands within the flames and if they permitted them to be consumed no further opposition was placed in the way of the fulfilment of their desires. But India is not the only country where women who have loved have followed immediately the loved one through the realms of immortality; suicide in such cases have occurred in every land. It is an uncommon bit of fanaticism in any country; as unusual in India as elsewhere. No, the speaker repeated, the people do not burn women in India; nor have they ever burned witches.

Proceeding to the lecture proper, Vive Kananda proceeded to analyze the physical, mental and soul attributes of life. The body is but a shell; the mind something that acts but a brief and fantastic part; while the soul has distinct individuality in itself. To realize the infinity of self is to attain "freedom" which is the Hindoo word for "salvation." By a convincing manner of argument the lecturer showed that every soul is something independent, for if it were dependent, it could not acquire immortality. He related a story from the old legends of his country to illustrate the manner in which the realization of this may come to the individual. A lioness leaping towards a sheep in the act gave birth to a cub. The lioness died and the cub was given suck by the sheep and for many years thought itself a sheep and acted like one. But one day another lion appeared and led the first lion to a lake where he looked in and saw his resemblance to the other lion. At that he roared and realized the full majesty of self. Many people are like the lion masquerading as a sheep and get into a corner, call themselves sinners and demean themselves in every imaginable fashion, not yet seeing the perfection and divinity which lies in self. The ego of man and woman is

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the soul. If the soul is independent, how then can it be isolated from the infinite whole? Just as the great sun shines on a lake and numberless reflections are the result, so the soul is distinct like each reflection, although the great source is recognized and appreciated. The soul is sexless. When it has realized the condition of absolute freedom, what could it have to do with sex which is physical? In this connection the lecturer delved deeply into the waters of Swedenborgian philosophy, or religion, and the connection between the conviction of the Hindoo and the spiritual expressions of faith on the part of the more modern holy man was fully apparent. Swedenborg seemed like a European successor of an early Hindoo priest, clothing in more modern garb an ancient conviction; a line of thought that the greatest of French philosophers and novelists [Balzac?] saw fit to embody in his elevating tale of the perfect soul. Every individual has in himself perfection. It lies within the dark recesses of his physical being. To say that a man has become good because God gave him a portion of His perfection is to conceive the Divine Being as God minus just so much perfection as he has imparted to a person on this earth. The inexorable law of science proves that the soul is individual and must have perfection within itself, the attainment of which means freedom, not salvation, and the realization of individual infinity. Nature! God! Religion! It is all one.

The religions are all good. A bubble of air in a glass of water strives to join with the mass of air without; in oil, vinegar and other materials of differing density its efforts are less or more retarded according to the liquid. So the soul struggles through various mediums for the attainment of its individual infinity. One religion is best adapted to a certain people because of habits of life, association, hereditary traits and climatic influences. Another religion is suited to another people for similar reasons. All that is, is best seemed to be the substance of the lecturer's conclusions. To try abruptly to change a nation's religion would be like a man who sees a river flowing from the Alps. He criticizes the way it has taken. Another man views the mighty stream descending from the Himalayas, a stream that has been running for generations and thousands of years,

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and says that it has not taken the shortest and best route. The Christian pictures God as a personal being seated somewhere above us. The Christian can not necessarily be happy in Heaven unless he can stand on the edge of the golden streets and from time to time gaze down into the other place and see the difference. Instead of the golden rule, the Hindoo believes in the doctrine that all non-self is good and all self is bad, and through this belief the attainment of the individual infinity and the freedom of the soul at the proper time will be fulfilled. How excessively vulgar, stated Vive Kananda, was the golden rule! Always self! always self! was the Christian creed. To do unto others as you would be done by! It was a horrible, barbarous, savage creed, but he did not desire to decry the Christian creed, for those who are satisfied with it to them it is well adapted. Let the great stream flow on, and he is a fool who would try to change its course, when nature will work out the solution. Spiritualist (in the true acceptance of the word) and fatalist, Vive Kananda emphasized his opinion that all was well and he had no desire to convert Christians. They were Christians; it was well. He was a Hindoo; that, also, was well. In his country different creeds were formulated for the needs of people of different grades of intelligence, all this marking the progress of spiritual evolution. The Hindoo religion was not one of self; ever egotistical in its aspirations, ever holding up promises of reward or threats of punishment. It shows to the individual he may attain infinity by non-self. This system of bribing men to become Christians, alleged to have come from God, who manifested Himself to certain men on earth, is atrocious. It is horribly demoralizing and the Christian creed, accepted literally, has a shameful effect upon the moral natures of the bigots who accept it, retarding the time when the infinity of self may be attained.

The letter which Mary Funke wrote to Swami Brahmananda and which has been published in the *Vedanta Kesari,* gives a much better picture of Swamiji in the process of answering questions than does the above report. Mary Funke writes:

"I remember that on his first visit to Detroit, when he was lecturing at the Unitarian Church, we were told that the Swami would

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be glad to answer any question we might wish to ask. The questions were to be written and put in a box one night and the Swami was to answer them publicly the evening following. Many of the questions submitted were serious, others were trivial and flat. Of course, some ninny asked the same old question about Hindu mothers throwing their babies to the crocodiles, etc. I noticed the Swami shrink as he read it and then came a smile of merry mischief and he told in a half serious, half comic manner how, when he was a baby, his mother took him to the Ganges but that he was 'such a fat little baby the crocodiles refused to swallow me'; and he added facetiously, 'whenever I feel badly about being such a fat monk, I think of how I was saved from the crocodiles and am comforted.' Then he suddenly became very serious, even stern, drew himself up proudly and in tones of thunder hurled forth, 'But, ladies and gentlemen, we, I assure you, never burned witches.' This brought down the house and there was cheer after cheer, for an American audience enjoys a joke on itself and none of us are proud of the burning of witches at Salem." (Actually, Swamiji gave this retort in connection with widows, not crocodiles.)

To continue with the newspaper reports of this Saturday evening lecture: The *Tribune* reporter, perhaps the same who had earlier heard "giants" for "Jains," this time heard "bury" for "burn"; but otherwise, with the exception of Swamiji's statements regarding the golden rule, he seems to have reported more or less accurately:

THEIR OWN CHOICE

That Story About Burying Widows Alive.

Swami Vive Kananda's Version of an Old Custom of India.

The Practice Forbidden by One Emperor, but It Grew Again Until Stopped by the English—Religious Fanatics in All Religions.

Swami Vive Kananda at the Unitarian Church last night declared that widows were never buried alive in India through religion or law, but the act in all cases had been voluntary

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on the part of the women. The practice had been forbidden by one emperor, but it had gradually grown again until a stop was put to it by the English government. Fanatics existed in all religions, the christian as well as the Hindu. Fanatics in India had been known to hold their hands over their heads in penance for so long a time that the arm had gradually grown stiff in that position, and so remained ever after. So, too, men had made a vow to stand still in one position. These persons would in time lose all control of the lower limbs and never after be able to walk. All religions were true, and the people practiced morality, not because of any divine command, but because of its own good. Hindus, he said, did not believe in conversion, calling it perversion. Associations, surroundings and educations were responsible for the great number of religions, and how foolish it was for an exponent of one religion to declare that another man's belief was wrong. It was as reasonable as a man from Asia coming to America and after viewing the course of the Mississippi to say to it: "You are running entirely wrong. You will have to go back to the starting place and commence it all over again." It would be just as foolish for a man in America to visit the Alps and after following the course of a river to the German Sea to inform it that its course was too tortuous and that the only remedy would be to flow as directed. The golden rule, he declared, was as old as the earth itself and to it could be traced all rules of morality [sic]. Man is a bundle of selfishness. He thought the hell fire theory was all nonsense. There could not be perfect happiness when it was known that suffering existed. He ridiculed the manner some religious persons have while praying. The Hindu, he said, closed his eyes and communed with the inner spirit, while some christians he had seen had seemed to stare at some point as if they saw God seated upon his heavenly throne. In the matter of religion there were two extremes, the bigot and the atheist. There was some good in the atheist, but the bigot lived only for his own little self. He thanked some anonymous person who had sent him a picture of the heart of Jesus. This he thought a manifestation of bigotry. Bigots belong to no religion. They are a singular phenomena [sic].

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This same paper (the *Detroit Tribune,* February 18), discussed the importance of Swamiji's first three lectures—"Manners and Customs of India," "Hindu Philosophy," and "The Divinity of Man" —in an editorial entitled "The Hindu Among Us":

> People whose ideas of India and its inhabitants are chiefly derived from the school book pictures of the Hindu mother standing on the bank of the Ganges and throwing her baby to a crocodile, and of the great car of juggernaut rolling over and crushing scores of devotees, must be a good deal astonished to hear a native Hindu like Swami Vive Kananda talk for an hour or two before intelligent American audiences, and hold their attention to the point of absolute silence, upon the customs, philosophy and religion of his own country. This heathen speaks the English language with more elegance than is usually heard from our platforms and pulpits, and he seasons his descriptions with a refinement of wit that is almost unequaled among all the speakers whose words are familiar to our ears in public addresses. His intellect is agile in a way that is marvelous, and if he stabs a belief or a custom which is distasteful to him he always does it with a needle and not with a pike-staff. His method is not like that of our conventional speakers. In his habit of moving about on the stage and talking sometimes in a way that suggests a soliloquy, he reminds one of John Fiske [a popular lecturer on Darwinism, etc.].
>
> It is not necessary for one to be a Hindu, or to have any sympathy with the Hindu system of religious belief, to appreciate and enjoy a man like Vive Kananda who has given a course of three lectures here in the last week. He could apparently go on without much effort and talk for a dozen successive evenings with a new topic and fresh thoughts for every night. It would be hard to imagine him reading from a manuscript or coming to an end of his discourse except for the reason that his time was up. He is not what is called a "talkative" man by any means, but when he is making a talk in the way of a lecture his fluency and readiness and nicety of expression are beyond praise.
>
> It is a good sign when christians are willing to hear all that can be said about religions other than their own. It is

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a hopeful state of affairs when a distinguished christian can meet a distinguished Hindu and listen respectfully to what he has to offer. The congress of religions at Chicago may be said to have marked an epoch in the history of beliefs. It showed the advocates of diverse faiths that they all had something to learn from each other. It was a great and fruitful experiment in the field of religious toleration. One result has been the appearance of this distinguished Hindu in our midst. It would not hurt us to listen to a disciple of Mahomet and another of Confucius. The study of religions by comparison is not an old science but it is one that marks in a very useful way the progress of the nineteenth century.

V

This was, of course, the voice of liberal Christianity—a voice, which, added to Swamiji's own, was enough to drive missionary-minded Christians into a veritable frenzy. Swamiji's opponents, however, almost invariably based their criticism upon written reports of his lectures. Because of this, a whole week went by and he had already left Detroit before the pulpits resounded with attacks against his provocative Saturday evening lecture, "The Divinity of Man," which was not printed until Sunday morning—too late for the sermons.

In the meantime, the liberal ministers who had heard his lecture had much to say. On Sunday, February 18, the Reverend Reed Stuart of the Unitarian Church delivered a sermon entitled, "The Gate Opening Toward the East," and Rabbi Grossman of the Temple Beth El spoke on "What Vive Kananda Has Taught Us." Condensed versions of both these sermons were given in the *Detroit Journal* of February 19. The *Detroit Tribune* of the same date, however, gave a more complete text of each. The following articles are condensations of the *Tribune* reports:

Rev. Reed Stuart preached a sermon on "The Gate Opening Toward the East" at the Unitarian Church yesterday morning. The subject was suggested by the recent lectures of Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu priest. Kananda was in Mr. Stuart's congregation yesterday morning, and he nodded

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his head in approval at frequent intervals during the discourse.

Mr. Stuart said: ". . . As persons are, so they think and as they think they act. Thus, sciences, governments, arts, philosophers, religions, are the product of temperament; and temperament is largely a product of latitude and longitude and material surroundings.

"Nowhere is this diversity more apparent than between the east and west. The eastern mind deals with the larger aspect of things; the western with the minute and measureable. The one believes in the All; the other also believes in the All, but separates it into the Many. The one unites, the other divides. The one believes in infinity; the other in boundaries. The one meditates; the other acts. . . . The one thinks of nature as an illusion and something to be freed from. The other faces nature, analyzes it, and sets it to work for him. . . . The one has given philosophy; the other science. The east has given religion; the west has given creeds. . . .

"The interesting young lecturer from India pleads that those of his countrymen who have given themselves up wholly to meditation shall be left to ply their avocation undisturbed. The more critical and incisive intellects from other nations should not molest them in their pleasant dreams. His plea ought to be granted. But to grant that, wholesale condemnation need not be passed upon all those who are gifted with power of action, or mixing their thoughts with nature and events and turning them to use for the welfare of humanity. . . .

"Civilization is not a fixed quantity. It implies a mysterious progress. It is mounting up a spiral stairway, the first step of which lies hidden now in the black abyss where the brute began to fade and the human began to appear—where soul gained its first triumph over sense—and whose last step is still hidden in the empyrean. Mankind is slowly and laboriously passing along it. The nations are all groups upon it at different stages. Some are higher than others. But no one is high enough to begin to boast. What they should do is to make a sympathetic comparison of the excellencies of each, and exchange good for good for the

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benefit of all humanity, and not make a hostile contrast between the best of one and the worst of the other. There is no need for any nation to send missionaries half around the world merely to point out the defects of another nation. Whatever exchange there is should be in kind. One excellence should be added to another excellence. Our missionaries who have returned have told us only of the vices of the East. When they were there they only told of the virtue of the christian civilization of the West. They told of the peace and purity and gentleness of christianity. When they came home they told us of the vices of paganism. The books they wrote abounded in illustrations of the car of Juggernaut and the deluded mortals casting themselves under the wheels; of widows burning themselves upon the burial pyre of their husbands; of devotees torturing themselves in many ways; of aged parents exposed to die of neglect; of mothers flinging their babies into the jaws of hideous crocodiles. Whatever good there was was all concealed from us.

"It would have been better for them and for us if they had told all the truth. Now that the East is sending missionaries to the West, it is to be hoped that they will not make the same mistake. They can go home and tell that so many in every thousand become murderers; many become thieves; that intemperance is widespread; that divorces are frequent; that there is much public and private dishonesty; that infanticide is not unknown. It would be easy to convince their countrymen that America is a complete failure, and that christianity is a religion of cruelty, fraud and superstitions. If they do this they will only do what our missionaries have done in the past. How much wiser and how much better for the world if they would go and find what is good in each civilization and carrying it back would make it common property. The ivory of one nation would make a fine setting for the gold of another nation. The spirituality of the East ought to be set in the practical reason of the West. . . .

"There is a demand becoming now quite general for a freer and larger religion. That we have gone to excess in our zeal for exact definitions and measurements there cannot

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be much doubt. Around religion we have built doctrinal and verbal barriers. It was all confined to one ancient book. Or it was crowded into a dogma, and put into the pigeon holes the sects had made and labeled as their own. . . .

"There is a growing disposition to remedy that mistake. It is seen in the unrest now prevalent in all the sects. . . . The time seems to be full of promise. Men are looking through the gate which opens toward the East, and see streaming through it the glory of the ideal, of the infinite—the splendor of that universe which lies beyond sense. . . ."

The Reverend Reed Stuart was perhaps a little cautious in making comparisons between East and West, but not so Rabbi Grossman. The rabbi, whose sermon follows, later became a devoted friend of Swamiji. It was at his temple that Swamiji lectured when he revisited Detroit in 1896:

A GOD EVERY DAY

Rabbi Grossman is Refreshed by Swami Vive Kananda

Hails the Words of the Talented
Hindu as Great Wisdom

The Lesson of Universal Brotherhood Taught by
the Indian—Too Much Creed about the Beliefs of
the West and Not Enough of True Religion.

Dr. Grossman, of the Temple Beth El, yesterday morning spoke on "What Vive Kananda Has taught Us." He said:

"It was refreshing to hear the healthy sense of Kananda after the morbid ecstacy of the Chapman revival. After listening to his truly natural religion one is not quite sure but there is more heathenism in this land of ours than ever we charged to his people. His religion goes beyond the limits of creed. Our creeds often go beyond the decent limits of religion. . . . Kananda says his Sanscrit has no word for persecution, but our language, our theology, our

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history, our life, is infected with a brood of such terms and our society is only the truce, and hostilities in it never cease. A quarrel about a vowel and the fine deduction of the scholiasts from it set Europe afire with zealotry. That word [homoiousion or homoousion] was written out with the blood of nations. What has not bigotry done? It has stalked, death in every step, over fertile fields and peaceful homes. It has torn parents from children, and children from parents, and today its gaunt hand is raised in secret against fellow-citizens and neighbors. Thank God, that at last, today, it must shrink from the light and is driven to its last despair.

"For years the churches have had missionaries to India, to China, and to the rest of the heathens. Good money, and what is more, the good will of the people have been put into the proselyting work, while all along our poor were at our door, and the charity, which was so much needed here, was turned into an enterprise as sanctimonious as it was distant. Every day hundreds pine away their dreary, somber lives in the tenement houses of New York, in the miserable back-yard shanties of our own city. The ministration of kind people might have cheered many a despondent soul, might have manned many an exhausted laborer, might have refreshed lives and rescued children from the infection and contagion of impoverished morality, but missionaries had to go to the 'heathen.' How, in this good and sympathetic country of ours, such an illusion, I will not say delusion, could enthrall the robust and sound-sensed citizens, I do not understand. Kananda has told us something of the heathen with a clearness, with a precision, with a candor, which puts to shame the confused and vehement pretension which so long has usurped an unrighteous prestige in church and religion.

"Religion is life, not thought. We have many ideas, fine, elegant notions, but they float in the air. Our religion deals with great ideas, but in catechisms only. The flesh and the blood of the average man has not yet been disciplined into the noble, natural sense, which is as reliable as it is sufficient. We talk of brotherhood, but insult freely a fellowman who happens to live in the East. Our theology makes free to condemn dissenters to hell and our priests and

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preachers are too busy in peopling the lower world to notice they are at the same time despoiling the world, for many, of its beauty, and charm and divine attractiveness. . . . We westerners, we have a God in the sky. Kananda has a God on earth. Our spirit [God] from the beginning is divinely idle save when unfortunate persons who pray unctuously every Sunday give Him something to do and send Him on multifarious errands of grace. Let us learn from the Hindu the lesson that God lives and reigns, now and ever, that God is in every flower of the field; in every breath of the air; in every throb of our blood.

" 'I take your Jesus,' Kananda said last Saturday evening. 'I take him to my heart as I take all the great and good of all lands and of all times. But you, will you take my Krishna to your heart? No—you cannot, you dare not—still you are the cultured and I am the heathen.'

"Here is the contrast, the great fatal flaw in christianity. It is a sect, a restricted, limited sect, not that responsive absorpture [sic], great world-thought and world-fact of a brotherhood. Oh, we say much of something like brotherhood and of equality and such things. True words. But you hear your pastor in the pulpit, that's one thing, do you see the facts of practice? That's another.

"The Hindu is hospitable—'Aditi' [Atithi, guest], cries the child into the door of the house, though the family be the poorest. 'Aditi' is the charm that opens all the floodgates of hospitality, and the guest is sacred. Contrast our parlor hypocrisies. The church is a holy place—oh, so it is, on Sunday for two hours. But not even on Sunday evening, that's the time for the young to come in pairs, as if to a party, which is as cheap as it is guileless. But to a people of 5,000 years of domestic virtue and neighborly rectitude every day is holy and every spot earnest and significant. . . ."

Both these sermons reflected the current dissatisfaction with Christian orthodoxy and the need for a vital religion undivorced from the intellectual, emotional and social conditions of the modern world. It was a need which Swamiji's teachings both stimulated and filled. But the *Evening News,* which in a later article called itself "an arbiter of the truth and an impartial friend or critic of all creeds

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and dogmas," took a somewhat resentful attitude toward the idea that the West could learn from the East. Rabbi Grossman's talk on "What Vive Kananda Has Taught Us" did not sit too well with the editor of the *News,* as is evidenced by the following excerpts of an editorial that appeared on February 20:

THE WONDERFUL LUCK OF
SWAMI KANANDA

Swami Vive Kananda may well pray his gods to save him from his American friends. This oriental gentleman came to Detroit last week and conducted himself in a manner to win all hearts. In personal appearance his very eye is suggestive of deep spirituality; in social converse he is delightful; on the lecture platform he is eloquent and persuasive. But the moment this distinguished personage became a temporary guest of Detroit, his admirers began to make him the fad of the hour. Though he did not give to the people of this city a single utterance that added to their previous knowledge of things in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, yet he was pushed to the front in private conversation and in editorials as the possessor of knowledges more wonderful than have ever been revealed to the occidental world.

Sunday the pulpit took up the fad, and Dr. Grossmann, of Temple Beth El, devoted the time usually allotted to a sermon to encomiums of the things that Kananda said in Detroit, as if that gentleman said a single thing that the students of christian literature are not perfectly familiar with. . . .

It is true that Rabbi Grossmann pointed out yesterday a thing or two that distinguishes, or which he concedes as distinguishing, oriental from occidental modes of thought. For instance, he points out that Kananda claims for the Sanscrit language that it has no word for what we call persecution. But does not the good rabbi know that neither has the English language any such word? It is probable that the Hindu monk did not know the meaning of the word "persecute" when he made that ridiculous comparison. We ourselves had to borrow the word from the Latins, and its

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meaning is nothing more horrid than to "follow up." The English is quite as lacking as the Sanscrit in a single word that expresses the idea of continuous pursuance with the purpose of injuring. Does the friend of Kananda believe that the Sanscrit has no way of expressing the idea of persecution? Does he believe Kananda if he says that the Hindu man never followed up to injure a Hindu man? And will Kananda look an intelligent occidental in the face with those great honest eyes of his and affirm that his language would have no word to express the act if a Hindu should suddenly take to persecuting another Hindu? . . .

(The remainder of this editorial consists of the paragraph, earlier quoted, which tells of how the *News* "wrested testimony" from Swamiji regarding miracles.)

Although those ministers who were, to say the least, not in accord with Swamiji had missed his Saturday night lecture, they undoubtedly found ample subject matter for many a sermon in his first and second lectures—particularly the first, in which he had said, with emphasis, that India was morally head and shoulders above the United States or any other nation on the globe and that missionaries would do well to learn from her. Unfortunately, the first Sunday sermons preached against Swamiji are not available, but that they existed is evidenced from the following letter, written by one of his anonymous defenders. This letter, which appeared in the *Free Press* of February 23, also gives a little information regarding the almost constant "following up" that Swamiji underwent:

Praise For Kananda.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

Much has been said about Swami Vive Kananda's attacks on the Christian religion. I do not think any one who has heard his lectures can truthfully say he has attacked the religion itself—that is, what Jesus taught. On the contrary, he has ever spoken with love and reverence of Jesus and His work. What he has done is to denounce the outward expression of so-called Christianity, the creeds, dogmas, superstitions and bigotry which degrade our faith on the one hand, and the dishonesty, cruelty, intolerance and utter

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selfishness which dominate our social and business life on the other. He has told us that in India with its population of 300,000,000 in about half the area of the United States, no one actually suffers for food if food is to be had; that only in time of famine, when there is no food, are any allowed to want. He that hath freely gives to him that hath not. What does he see in this country to-day, this country of twice the area of his own and only 65,000,000 of people? Hundreds and thousands cold and starving and half clad, not through a failure of the food supply, not because there is not plenty of fuel in the land, not because we have no wool and cotton for clothing—for there is an abundance and to spare of all these, so that none may suffer—but because of our false industrial conditions, because of our selfish greed and grasping, every man for himself regardless of his brother man, so that the few have almost all, the many scarce nothing [sic]. Is this Christianity, what Jesus meant when he said "Love thy neighbor as thyself"? I deny it.

Also, when we come to know the facts as to how Kananda has been treated personally, is it to be wondered at that he has told us some caustic truths about ourselves? In Chicago he was maligned and persecuted by fanatical women—American women, think of it! In this city he has been assailed with most insulting letters in nearly every mail. Before he ever addressed one word to the public here, a woman, be it said to her shame, took it upon herself to attack and most unkindly denounce him to his face in a house to which she was invited as a guest to meet him. He has also been imposed upon and most unjustly dealt with in the management of his lecture tour through his lack of knowledge of our laws and our custom to overreach and take every mean advantage we can in business. He has been preached against in almost savage terms from some of our orthodox pulpits by ministers who know nothing of what he has said except by the newspaper reports, which, I think, were inadequate and greatly misleading. How dare these men pronounce upon him without first hearing him! "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Under these circumstances, is it astonishing that he has told us some of our faults? Indeed, I think he has been

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exceedingly mild and temperate. It seems to me it is a good thing for us that people outside the Christian world should come and tell us how we appear to them. Give us more Kananda not less, to make us see ourselves as others see us, say I. How is it that we, who claim to worship the gentle Nazarene, who gave us a gospel of toleration and love, were ever ready in the past to kill and torture, and are in the present eager to bitterly attack and persecute those who differ from us? Our preachers preach the universal brotherhood of man, and yet, when the eastern brother comes to us, we have nothing but contumely for him. How can we expect him to form any opinion of us other than he has?

And yet, Kananda, judge us not all to be so narrow and unfeeling. There are some of us, not many, I am sorry to say, who really try to strip our minds of the dogmas and superstitions that have somehow attached themselves to our faith, and to truly follow the humble and tender teacher of Judea, whose love included the whole world, and all of us extend to you the hand of welcome and of fellowship, and say to you, "brother."

JUSTITIA.

This letter from "Justitia" started off a controversy in the *Detroit Free Press* letter column, "From Our Readers," that lasted through February. The main issue was whether or not one had to hear and see Swamiji before one could be in a position to judge him. Although this controversy was fruitless, it is revealing of the fact that those who *had* seen and heard him were convinced that he was no mere lecturer, but a power, and that to see and hear him was an experience, the essence of which one could not communicate through words. It is evident that Swamiji's lectures, significant as they are, were but a small fraction of what he gave to America through the tremendous vitality of his presence. Furthermore, those who heard him always spoke of his "mild manner," "his liberal, generous and holy spirit"—and so forth. On reading his lectures, his criticisms, though rare, seem sometimes drastic; yet he was never harsh, and except for his enemies, his hearers seldom took offense at his rebukes, for such was his love for all men and such was his uplifting power, that few felt from him anything but benediction. The following letters are indicative of this, and I believe they are also indicative

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of the general ferment and excitement that Swamiji created in Detroit. "Justitia" and "One Who Heard All The Lectures" are no doubt representative of hundreds who heard him, and "Occidental" of hundreds who didn't hear him and perhaps of some who did.

The first response to "Justitia" from "Occidental" appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* of February 25:

Kananda Again.

To The Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

Being one of those found fault with in a communication in Friday morning's Free Press for assuming to criticise Mr. Kananda without having heard him, it seems eminently proper to state my position. Mr. Kananda has been thrust upon me as a subject for discussion without my asking. Some of my most intimate and cordial friends, who have heard the Hindoo monk, have not hesitated to discuss the subject matter of one or more of his addresses in my presence, thereby inevitably thrusting upon me the position of defending my own tenets of faith or giving silent consent to those of the discussion. And now, forsooth, one is told that he must have heard the addresses in order to deal fairly with the subject.

My position is like this, which is formulated merely from the statements of what my friends have heard. The conviction is strongly impressed on my mind that this man of the east is as great a trickster with facts as some of his native prestidigitators are with eggs, or other material objects, making them appear and disappear at pleasure. Don't infer from this, please, a fear on my part of having my religious faith shaken by what he might say; this would imply a decided lack of steadfastness, but rather infer a scorning to hear sacred truths handled in a spirit savoring in the least of unfairness or charlatanism.

And now please follow me through one or two examples of this lack of fairness in Mr. Kananda's method of treating Christianity. In the course of one of his discussions he read letters or extracts of letters that had been addressed to him here. One of these he stated contained a picture, for which he desired to return thanks, which picture he further stated

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was called "The Heart of Our Savior." Of course it was only necessary to make such a statement without comment to cause a sardonic smile to ripple over an audience of Christian believers, to say nothing of the emotions caused in the skeptics present. However, Mr. Kananda must have known that he thus implied an exhibition of a synonym of our religion, whereas, and notwithstanding any amount of gentlest sentiment that might cluster around such a symbol of our Savior's love for the sender, ninety-nine persons out of every hundred would say, and ought to say, on sober second thought, that there was more sentiment than sense in thus placing a weapon of ridicule in an opponent's hands. But is this a fair way to deal with such a sacred subject, may I ask?

Again, Mr. Kananda stated that one inquirer wished to know whether or not they burned widows in his country. To this he replied by condoning the fact that widows burned themselves, as he stated, and added: "We do not burn witches in India." Here is exhibited the same spirit of unfairness and ridicule. Does Mr. Kananda mean to seriously imply that we condone the burning of witches as a tenet of our religious faith, or that the Christian world ever did so?

We assume to be progressive, if anything, and assert with little fear of controversion [sic] that Christianity has done more to humanize mankind, wherever founded, than any or all other religions. Then, why this implication by Mr. Kananda? Undoubtedly we have the Spanish inquisition, the Scottish kirk and the Salem, Mass., episodes to blush for in connection with the followers of our faith, but we have not, thank heaven, such scenes as attended the Sepoy insurrection as a recent heritage from the humanizing influences of Christianity.

Let me suggest, in closing, that if any friends conclude to serenade Mr. Kananda before he leaves our city, that they may secure a Scotch band to play "The Campbells are Coming," which, it will be remembered, was the first sound to greet the ears of the besieged at Lucknow and notify them that relief was at hand.

OCCIDENTAL.

Detroit, February 24.

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Before "Justitia" had a chance to answer this diatribe, she gained an ally in "One Who Heard All The Lectures":

Doesn't Think Hearsay Will Do.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

I observed a communication in this morning's Free Press from one who signs himself "Occidental." The writer states that one cannot judge Kananda, so he is told, unless he has heard the monk. The writer of the communication expresses surprise that he is not capable of judging him from what his friends have told him about the lectures. It seems to me that one could as easily criticise one of Raphael's pictures from hearsay as to express an opinion about anyone without having heard him. I could just as accurately pass an opinion upon one of Mozart's operas from having heard a friend hum or whistle a few arias as this writer can upon the Brahman visitor without either having met him or having listened to him. Under the circumstances it seems supremely stupid either to sit in judgment or even to venture to express an opinion, no matter how pompous the writer may be in the way he words his opinions. In confessing to ignorance of the monk, the writer stamps his ideas of him at once as totally valueless and unworthy of more than passing mention. One should realize that hearsay cannot be depended upon; after statements have passed through a few hands they emerge in all kinds of distorted forms, and this meager and misleading information is all that the writer has to base his opinions upon. Without in any way desiring to eulogize Kananda, it might not be amiss to respectfully advise the writer of the communication under consideration to go and hear the monk when he again comes here, to digest carefully what he says, sleep over it, throw away from his clouded intellect all habiliments of prejudice and then, after praying and fasting for a time, write another letter to The Free Press, giving his estimate of the character of the visitor's religious teachings.

I was at the lecture and heard what Kananda said about witches. He cast no reflection on Christians. What he said was that, so far as widows being thrown into the flames by the people of his country was concerned, no facts could bear

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out the exaggerated statements of travelers relating thereto. After refuting the falsehood, he added, but in "India they never did burn witches." So much for this alleged fling at Christianity. The conclusion of the letter is unworthy of serious consideration. In India Kananda says that the Hindoos receive the Christian missionaries in the spirit of tolerance. They smile at them and say: "Let them go ahead. They are children in religion. Let them amuse themselves." They regard them with a broad philosophical smile. How differently have we treated a single Hindoo missionary? We haven't stoned him or tried to boil him in a pot in a cannibal fashion, but we have assailed him with mean, anonymous letters, calling him all kinds of vilifying names and have politely informed him, without signing any names, that there was a warm place waiting for him hereafter, and we have robbed him of the funds to which he is entitled as a lecturer. No wonder he feels bitter toward Americans as a money-loving country when he has realized hardly nothing from his lectures for the grand object he has in view—the establishment of an educational institution in India—while his unscrupulous managers have reaped nearly all. Kananda knows not the value of money. He was an easy mark for speculating managers. I am not a profound admirer of Kananda, but I like to see a square deal given everyone even if he is a "heathen."

ONE WHO HEARD ALL THE LECTURES.

Detroit, February 25.

"Occidental," who, on the whole, does not appear to be very bright, evidently confused "One Who Heard All the Lectures" with his original opponent "Justitia," and answered as though carrying on the same correspondence:

More Kananda.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

It appears that "One Who Heard All the Lectures" (Kananda's) still insists that a person must at least hear the oriental, whether inclined that way or not, in order to enter

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into an intelligent discussion of the subject matter of his discourses. But, unhappily for me, there is added both penance and prayer before my condition will be fitted for this exalted privilege. And it is hinted at in the Raphael simile that one must see as well as hear Kananda before a just estimate of his discourses can be formed; be it known, therefore, that Occidental must have seen him once, having occupied a front seat at the opening of the world's congress of religious bodies. However, isn't all this simply absurd?

Suppose the Hindoo's addresses had received that attention that "One Who Heard All the Lectures" regards as requisite, must another person surrender at command every opinion formed by forty years of casual reading as well as those resulting from conversations with an intimate acquaintance (a missionary's son), born in India, who grew to young manhood there, speaking their language and singing their songs, merely on Kananda's statements?

Having heard and seen the Hindoo, is it not possible that some might not be better prepared to discuss the questions involved than before: besides, in this country is it not usual to defend opinions when they are assailed without such formality as this case seems to demand?

Sympathy is extended to the disappointment manifested over the financial failure of Kananda's undertaking, but if he also failed to make converts here, please regard the sympathy as ending with the money questions involved.

In conclusion, please receive assurance that nothing has been said less complimentary of Kananda than he has said collectively of all American men and women.

OCCIDENTAL.

February 27, 1894

But it was "Justitia" who had the last word. In the same column as the above letter, appeared her reply to "Occidental's" previous one.

"Justitia" to "Occidental."

To The Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

Referring to the letter of "Occidental" in reply to my former communication, I am pleased to see the gentleman

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realized his position required defense. He admits that the inquisition, Scottish kirk and Salem persecutions were stains upon our past, but from his manner of referring to the Sepoy insurrections as a recent outcome of the eastern faith, one is led to infer that he would have us think we have no blots upon our modern life to blush for. In the first place, the Sepoy rebellion was not altogether a religious matter. It was the rising of a subject people against a foreign invader, and would never have occurred if the English had kept their hands off India. It was not a case of fratricidal strife of the people among themselves. Let us look at Christendom. Has the gentleman forgotten the French revolution, an internal outbreak of the people against rulers of their own blood and faith, the atrocities of which certainly equaled, if they did not surpass, those of the Sepoy mutiny? And yet France had been Christian for centuries. Coming to our own time and country, has he also forgotten the war of the rebellion, which emphatically was one of brother against brother, where we sprung to cut one another's throats in the heart of our own nation, and the horrors of whose Andersonville and Libby prisons, at least, were not far behind those he refers to? And yet we were Christians, and so were our forefathers for generations before us. Kananda does not claim that his religion and civilization contain all the good there is in the world and ours all the bad. Neither should we, I think, arrogate to ourselves all the good and ascribe to his land all the bad. Let us be actuated by a broad spirit of charity and remove the beam from our own eyes before we attempt to do so for others. As to the principles upon which our civilization and faith are founded, there are none grander. Let us live up to them.

In conclusion, I would ask the reverend brother whether he thinks such preaching and writing as he has indulged in exemplify a gospel of love. Also, would a brass band serenading Kananda with "The Campbells Are Coming" be Jesus' way to bring the stranger within our gates to a realizing sense of the "humanizing" influence of Christianity?

JUSTITIA.

Detroit, February 26.

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This was the end of the matter. "Occidental" no doubt went on thinking as he thought, but for nearly a month he wrote no more letters, or if he did, they were not published.

While we are on the subject of letters, a curious one appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* letter column during the progress of the above controversy. It is difficult to know just what the writer was endeavoring to prove, but whatever it may have been, his letter stands as added testimony to the fact that Swamiji's statements were not taken lightly by anyone. They were either vehemently resented or heartily endorsed. In this age of transition, in which Western civilization was beginning to re-examine its foundations and structure, Swamiji, as has been pointed out, represented the reforming and progressive spirit of America. The liberal forces rallied round him, while the reactionary forces attacked him with any weapon they could—even citing at length the ancient laws of Manu. The letter in question read in part as follows:

Hindoo vs. Christian Civilization and Law.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

In view of the fact that this community has been recently favored with the presence of a distinguished and learned Hindoo monk—Kananda—who expressed himself freely, as he had an undoubted right to do, in criticism of our "Christian" civilization, I am tempted to devote a leisure hour or two in laying before the multitude of your readers, a few scattered points of Hindoo law, as taken from Sir William Jones' "Institutes of Hindoo Law," being a translation of the "Ordinances of Manu."

The laws of a nation are the best criterion of its civilization. The extracts herewith presented—like the early statutes or ordinances of the Puritans in this land—may have been, many of them, repealed; but do not both tend to show the fact, as the monk is reported to have stated, of a kinship of both peoples to the ancient Aryan race, with the Sanscrit language in common? I quote: "In the Hindoo law of Baron and Feme we find many judicious enactments. Thus every Hindoo is enjoined not to marry 'a girl with reddish hair,' or 'with inflamed eyes,' or who is 'immoderately talkative,' but one who 'walks gracefully like

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a phenecopteros (?) or like a young elephant.' By way of insuring respect for the Feme (woman) in the married state, the Baron is very properly forbidden 'to eat with his wife or look at her eating or sneezing, or yawning, or sitting carelessly at her ease.' The gentleman is also himself enjoined not 'to read lolling on a couch, nor with his feet raised on a bench, nor with his thighs crossed, nor having lately swallowed meat.' "

The mode of recovering a debt is much the same as under the Grutoo law: "By whatever means a Lawful creditor may have gotten possession of his own property, let the king ratify such payment by the debtor, though obtained even by compulsory means. By the mediation of friends, by suit in court, by artful management, or by distress, a creditor may recover the property lent, and fifthly by legal force." [Here follows a solid column of ancient Hindu laws which are not pertinent to nineteenth century America. The writer, no doubt a lawyer, ends his letter with the following plea:]

I ask the admirers and apologists of this monk if the standard of civilization is the regulated liberty enjoyed by and the enlightened intelligence possessed by the individual in a nation, about how much inferior are the American people of to-day to this priest-ridden people of Hindoostan?

HAMILTON GAY HOWARD.

Detroit, February 23, 1894

VI

While Swamiji was making enemies among the "blue-nosed," "hard-shelled" and "soft-shelled" fanatics, he was at the same time making numerous friends among the cultural and intellectual circles of Detroit. Readers of "The Life" know from the letters of Mrs. Bagley how deeply he was respected in that "old conservative city," and how much sought after. Perhaps no day went by during his stay in Detroit that he was not entertained. "We all enjoyed every day of the six weeks he spent with us," Mrs. Bagley writes. ". . . He was invited by the different clubs of gentlemen in Detroit, and dinners were given him in beautiful homes so that greater numbers might

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meet him and talk with him and hear him talk . . . and everywhere and at all times he was, as he deserved to be, honoured and respected."

A report in the "Personal and Social" column of the *Detroit Journal* of Monday, February 19, tells of the various luncheons, teas and dinners given for Swamiji during his first week in Detroit. Although the following item seems somewhat confused, it at least indicates that he was often and elaborately entertained, or, more to the point, that many people came into close contact with him, conversed with him and absorbed something of his thought, and who knows how much of his spirit:

"PERSONAL AND SOCIAL"

Charles L. Freer gave a small reception and supper Saturday evening in honour of Swami Vive Kananda. The guests were George H. Russel, William H. Wells, Bryant Walker, Dr. F. W. Mann, Fred H. Seymour, John N. Bagley, Joseph H. Brewster, L. A. McCreary, John C. Grout, Capt. Gardiner, Charles M. Swift, F. T. Sibley, Harry W. Skinner, Dr. Devendorf, T. S. Jerome, Dr. Jennings, I. T. Cowles, L. F. Schultz, George Mason, Zach Rice, S. T. Douglass, George Nettleton, George S. Hosmer and Rev. Reed Stuart.

A number of fashionable and private entertainments were given last week in honor of the social lion of the day, Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk. Tuesday evening [?] Miss Helen Bagley gave a luncheon at the Detroit club to a favored few. Thursday evening, the evening after the large public reception given by Mrs. John J. Bagley, at the family residence on Washington-ave, a select tea was given by Mrs. Bagley. Friday evening C. L. Freer entertained the Witenagamote club at his home on Ferry-ave., for Mr. Kananda. A number of other guests were present. All of these entertainments were very elaborate affairs.

Mr. Charles L. Freer was a young railway and industrial capitalist —a partner in the Michigan-Peninsular Car Company, which was the largest car-building enterprise in the country. Huge fortunes were made readily in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and, as has been pointed out, even before the advent of the automobile Detroit was a city of industry and wealth. For the most part, wealthy

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industrialists were absorbed in making and spending their fortunes. But Freer was an exception to the rule. "By one of those subtle alchemies of personality that escape logic," one account of him tells, his interest was centered in Oriental art. Charles Freer gathered what is said to be the greatest collection of Chinese and Japanese masterpieces ever brought together in America. This entire collection he later gave to the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D. C., together with the building which houses it. Although Freer did not start to gather his masterpieces in earnest until he retired in 1900, very likely his house already showed signs of becoming a museum of Oriental art when Swamiji dined there in 1894.

It seems unfortunate that those who knew Swamiji in the various American cities he visited were not contacted during their lifetime. What a wealth of anecdotes could have been gathered! But at least two incidents, which could have occurred at Freer's dinner party, are preserved by the following item in the *Evening News* of February 25:

CULTURE AT HOME.

Anecdotes of Swami Vive Kananda's Visit to Detroit.

Anecdotes of Swami Vive Kananda's visit are numerous and amusing—at least they must have been amusing to him, although a little humiliating to the American self-love. One lady said:

"I really was ashamed at the contrast between the knowledge possessed by him and by some of our Detroit men who consider themselves gentlemen of culture. At one dinner a gentleman asked Kananda what books he would advise him to read on chemistry, whereupon the Hindu monk responded with a long list of English works on this science, which one would naturally expect an American to know more about than a Hindu. Another gentleman followed by a request as to books on astronomy, to which Kananda obligingly answered with another equally good list of English astronomical works. But his growing astonishment reached its climax when a lady spoke of 'The Christ,' and said, 'What do those words mean?' He again furnished the desired information, but in a tone growing slightly sarcastic."

Probably the choicest example of nineteenth century

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civilization and culture was given by a lady, who asked Kananda if he liked the English. He very naturally responded that he did not. Then she continued, with fine tact, to pursue the subject still further by touching references to that pleasant event, the Sepoy rebellion. As the Hindu grew excited she smiled at him ironically and said:

"I thought I could disturb your philosophical Eastern calm."

It was indeed rare that Swamiji grew excited. Those who knew him often remarked upon the fact that no matter how violent his antagonist, he remained always calm and serene. Perhaps the only subject which aroused his anger, particularly in the early days, was that of the English in India—a topic best left undiscussed. But there was no dearth of topics to discuss with Swamiji, who continually surprised and delighted his friends with his unending knowledge on every imaginable subject. The conversations at the private gatherings held for him must have covered many fields—science, history, art, politics—and upon each he must have thrown the light not only of his intellectual knowledge but of his spiritual insight. But the subject dearest to his heart was India. That the desire to collect funds for his motherland was still uppermost in his mind during the Detroit period can be seen from the following excerpts of an article that appeared in the *Detroit Tribune* of February 18 and was written by one of the guests at the Saturday (?) evening supper given by Mr. Freer:

HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

Its Recent Expression by Vive Kananda.

His Mission Worthy the Serious Attention of Americans.

The Two Remarkable Things in the United States Which Gratifies the Distinguished Pagan—What Environment Will Do for Any People—Rap at Missionaries.

There has seldom been such a sensation in cultured circles in Detroit, as that created by the advent of Swami

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Vive Kananda, the learned Hindu monk, whose exceptional command of our own language has enabled us to receive impressions concerning ourselves from an oriental standpoint and to acquire knowledge of a people of whose peculiar civilization and philosophy we have heard so much.

Both in public and private the Hindu brother has talked freely and frankly. He acknowledges that the masses in India are very poor, very ignorant and are divided into a diversity of sects, with forms of worship varying from downright idolatry to the broadest and most liberal form of divine conception based on the brotherhood of man and the oneness of God. His mission, he says, is not to proselyte us—to try and make us think as he does—but to get means to start a college in India for the education of teachers who are to go among the common people and work a reform of existing evils, of which there are many. He states that India is priest-ridden to a harrowing degree. It is priest-craft that distorts truth and perpetuates ignorance. It is priest-craft that substitutes its own crude and narrow interpretations for truth, which perverts the people and prevents their moral progression. The Swami regards all sects and creeds from a broad basis. He even sees good in idolatry. It is an ideal, he thinks, for the ignorant whose mental capacity is insufficient to grasp abstract ideas, and who require a direct personification in some material form. He frankly states that we of the occident are also retarded in our progression by too much priest-craft, and that we are not free from idolatrous practices, in that some of our sects worship shrines, figures and pictures and even the sanctity with which the rostrum and pulpit of a modern church is regarded is an ideal idolatry.

Two Remarkable Things in This Country.

The Swami notes two most remarkable things in this country, when asked his frank opinion of us: First, the superiority of our women, as regards influence in position and intellect. Second, in our charities and treatment of the poor, he says, we have almost solved the problem as to what shall be done with them. Not only in this, in the direction of hospitals and charitable institutions, but in our tremendous

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development of labor-saving machinery. He has no admiration for our material progress, as it does not make man better, nor for our boasted civilization, as we only ape and imitate the customs and manners of the English—sometimes to a very ridiculous extent. We are yet too young, to have a distinctive civilization ; we have yet to assimilate the human sewerage of Europe we have allowed to be poured upon us, before we produce a distinct American type.

[The writer goes on to say that Swamiji's Indian background makes it difficult for him to understand that Western competitiveness is not undesirable but a primal law of nature itself—the survival of the fittest, and that inasmuch as "the dreamy and sentimental philosophy of the Hindoos" accounts for their poverty, degradation and domination by a "mere handful of Englishmen," the Swami would do well neither to ignore nor despise the materialism of the West. Having thus editorialized, he continues more factually:]

His Criticism of Missionaries.

If what he states is true about the results accomplished by foreign missions in India, the various boards of these various organizations would do well to consult him and follow his advice. It is for the betterment of his people he is here. But he says missionary work does no good ; only adds additional sects and creeds to an already sect-ridden country ; that the teachings of the Vedas, with which every Hindoo is familiar, is identical with the teachings of Christ. He makes the reasonable plea that foreign creeds and dogmas are not consonant with their inherited proclivities or civilization, and are consequently difficult to propagate.

The mission of Kananda is, however, one that should commend it [self] to every lover of humanity. He hopes to see the best of our material philosophy and progress infused into Hindoo civilization, and that, also, we may take lessons from them, until we shall all become, as we once were in ages past, brother Aryans, possessing a common civilization —the exalted philosophy of non-self, being alike without sect or creed in oneness with God.

FRED H. SEYMOUR.

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It is almost impossible to know how much help Swamiji was able to obtain for the work in India from individual donations, but very likely some of his wealthy and sympathetic friends contributed at least something to his cause. We know, for instance, that Mr. Charles Freer was such a contributor. The following letter from Mrs. Bagley's married daughter, Mrs. Florence Bagley Sherman, gives evidence of this fact and also of the fact that Swamiji was considering a return to India. It was written after Swamiji had left Detroit the first time and was addressed to the care of Mrs. Hale at 541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago:

Washington Avenue
Feb. 24th 1894

Dear Mr Vive Kananda:

My mother wishes me to write for her, expressing her regret that the draft for the money received here was not sent today. It will go early Monday morning, and I trust will be received on time to save you any annoyance.

Mr. Freer, the gentleman at whose house we dined, sent a check last evening, for two hundred dollars—to Mrs. Bagley—to be forwarded to you, so that is included in the draft.

Do believe me—my dear Mr. Kananda—when I say—that when you have been able to enlist the interest and practical help of men like my friend Mr. Freer, in your work, you have no right to go back to India without one supreme effort for your normal school: your personal appeal—with your magnetism—your powerful—masterful presence, can alone make that appeal effective. If in any way we can aid you—I am sure you will ask us, feeling sure of our sympathy and respect.

Yours very sincerely
Florence Bagley Sherman

The draft referred to was no doubt for money collected at a lecture Swamiji gave at Mrs. Bagley's home. It may also be mentioned, parenthetically, that it was of Mrs. Bagley Sherman that he wrote to Mary Hale on March 30, when he was about to make his final departure from Detroit: "By the by, Mrs. Sherman has presented me with a lot of things amongst which is a nail set and letter holder and a little satchel etc., etc. Although I objected,

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especially to the nail set, as very dudish with mother of pearl handles, she insisted and I had to take them although I do not know what to do with that brushing instrument. Lord bless them all. She gave me one advice—never to wear this Afrikee dress in society. Now I am a society man! Lord! What comes next? Long life brings queer experiences!"

VII

Although Swamiji's first visit to Detroit extended from February 12 to 23, he had originally intended to stay only one week, giving a series of three lectures at the Unitarian Church. But the people—the hundreds who had heard him speak both publicly and at private gatherings, and the hundreds more who wanted to hear him—would not let him leave their city so soon. As is seen by the following announcement in the *Detroit Free Press* of Monday, February 19, he was induced to give a fourth lecture:

> VIVE KANANDA ON "LOVE."
>
> The Hindoo monk, Vive Kananda, will give an extra lecture at the Unitarian Church on Wednesday evening, February 21, on the subject of "Love." Many of those who have already heard him, and many who have failed to do so, have put in a special request for another opportunity to listen to his interesting and eloquent discourses.

There was some confusion regarding the date on which this lecture was to be given. As has been seen above, it was announced, as late as February 19, as scheduled for Wednesday, February 21. Other papers made this same mistake in their "Amusement Columns," which must have misled all those who failed to check further, for actually Swamiji gave his fourth lecture on Tuesday, February 20. Although a correction did not appear in the papers until Tuesday morning, the confusion of dates did not confound too many. The Unitarian Church was jammed, and one is reminded of Sister Christine's description of Swamiji's Detroit audiences:

"Those who came to the first lecture at the Unitarian Church came to the second and to the third bringing others with them. 'Come,' they said, 'hear this wonderful man. He is like no one we have ever heard'; and they came until there was no place to hold

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them. They filled the room, stood in the aisles, peered in at the windows." And Swamiji's fourth lecture, which Sister Christine does not mention, was the most crowded of all!

The *Detroit Free Press* report on "The Love of God" was one of those which was sent by Mary Funke to Swami Brahmananda and which has been reproduced (in slightly altered form) in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works." The headlines and first paragraph of the actual report read as follows:

SONGS OF SOLOMON

Kananda Views Them with the Greatest Admiration.

One Should Not Approach God in a Begging Spirit.

Story of the Religion of a Hindoo Saint.

Another Lecture This Afternoon on
Hindoo Philosophy

Vive Kananda delivered a lecture on "The Love of God" at the Unitarian church last night, before the largest audience that he has yet had. The trend of the lecturer's remarks was to show that we do not accept God because we really want Him, but because we have need of Him for selfish purposes. Love, said the speaker, is something absolutely unselfish; that which has no thought beyond the glorification and adoration of the object upon which our affections are bestowed. It is a quality which bows down and worships and asks nothing in return. . . .

Another version of this lecture, which will not be so familiar, was given by the *Detroit Tribune* of February 21, as follows:

THE HINDU ON LOVE

He Addresses a Large and Fashionable Audience

The First Unitarian Church was crowded last night to hear Vive Kananda. The audience was composed of people

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who came from Jefferson avenue and the upper part of Woodward Avenue. Most of it was ladies who seemed deeply interested in the address and applauded several remarks of the Brahman with much enthusiasm.

The love that was dwelt upon by the speaker was not the love that goes with passion, but a pure and holy love that one in India feels for his God. As Vive Kananda stated at the commencement of his address the subject was "The Love the Indian Feels for His God." But he did not preach to his text. The major portion of his address was an attack on the christian religion. The religion of the Indian and the love of his God was the minor portion. The points in his address were illustrated with several applicable anecdotes of famous people in the history. The subjects of the anecdotes were renowned Mogul emperors of his native land and not of the native Hindu kings.

The professors of religion were divided into two classes by the lecturer, the followers of knowledge and the followers of devotion. The end in the life of the followers of knowledge was experience. The end in the life of the devotee was love.

Love, he said, was a sacrifice. It never takes, but it always gives. The Hindu never asks anything of his God, never prayed for salvation and a happy hereafter, but instead lets his whole soul go out to his God in an entrancing love. That beautiful state of existence could only be gained when a person felt an overwhelming want of God. Then God came in all of His fullness.

There were three different ways of looking at God. One was to look upon Him as a mighty personage and fall down and worship His might. Another was to worship Him as a father. In India the father always punished the children and an element of fear was mixed with the regard and love for a father. Still another way to think of God was as a mother. In India a mother was always truly loved and reverenced. That was the Indian's way of looking at their God.

Kananda said that a true lover of God would be so wrapt up in his love that he would have no time to stop and tell members of another sect that they were following the wrong

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road to secure the God, and strive to bring him to his way of thinking.

Vive Kananda said last night that he expected to leave Detroit this evening.

The *Detroit Journal* also commented on "The Love of God" as follows:

A MERE HOBBY.

That is Vive Kananda's Opinion of Modern Religion.

If Vive Kananda, the Brahmin monk, who is delivering a lecture course in this city could be induced to remain for a week longer the largest hall in Detroit would not hold the crowds which would be anxious to hear him. He has become a veritable fad, as last evening every seat in the Unitarian church was occupied, and many were compelled to stand throughout the entire lecture.

The speaker's subject was, "The Love of God." His definition of love was "something absolutely unselfish; that which has no thought beyond the glorification and adoration of the object upon which our affections are bestowed." Love, he said, is a quality which bows down and worships and asks nothing in return. Love of God, he thought, was different. God is not accepted, he said, because we really need him, except for selfish purposes. His lecture was replete with story and anecdote, all going to show the selfish motive underlying the motive of love for God. The Songs of Solomon were cited by the lecturer as the most beautiful portion of the Christian Bible and yet he had heard with deep regret that there was a possibility of their being removed. "In fact," he declared, as a sort of clinching argument at the close, "the love of God appears to be based upon a theory of 'What can I get out of it?' Christians are so selfish in their love that they are continually asking God to give them something, including all manner of selfish things. Modern religion is, therefore, nothing but a mere hobby and fashion and people flock to church like a lot of sheep."

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> Kananda expected to leave the city this morning, but he has been prevailed upon to remain over and deliver one more lecture this afternoon. It will be given at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley.

Jefferson Avenue and the upper part of Woodward Avenue, referred to at the beginning of the *Tribune* report, were representative of the most fashionable residential streets of Detroit. Here many of the city's influential industrialists of the gay nineties lived in large stone mansions, surrounded, especially on Woodward Avenue, by broad lawns and great trees. Perhaps not all the industrialists attended Swamiji's lectures, for, although he had many ardent admirers among Detroit's men, few had time to divert their attention from business to philosophy. On the whole, it was the women who had taken over the cultural life of the nation. "Women not only controlled education and religion," writes H. S. Commager of the latter part of nineteenth-century America, "but largely dictated the standards of literature and art and clothed culture so ostentatiously in feminine garb that the term itself came to have connotations of effeminacy." But to Swamiji there was nothing effeminate, nothing weakening, in the influence of women. He could not say enough in his letters to India of these American "goddesses." "I am almost at my wit's end," he once wrote, "to see the women of this country! . . . They do all sorts of work—I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do. They are like Lakshmi in beauty, and like Saraswati in virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate, and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything. . . . If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas—Incarnations of the Divine Mother—in our country, before I die, I shall die in peace. Then only will your countrymen become worthy of their name."

It was hardly Swamiji's fault that those who attended his lectures belonged mainly to the intellectual and cultural classes. Indeed, it could not very well have been otherwise. Nor was it his fault that the progressive ministers who espoused his cause had, at the same time, a reputation for catering to the wealthy and the fashionable. Yet, there existed so much bitterness between classes in the nineties that Swamiji was accused, along with other slander, of being exclusive! One such criticism came in a letter dated March 20, 1894, to the editor of the *Detroit Free Press* from one who certainly had not heard all the lectures.

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The anonymous writer stated with a good deal of asperity that the preachers of progressive, or creedless, Christianity catered only to wealth and aristocracy, thus dividing religion into social castes and failing to make any impression on the masses. "From a social standpoint," he writes, "the religious revival inaugurated in Detroit by Swami Vive Kananda, Citizen Palmer and others is the ideal of missionary work. To deliver well-paid lectures to a select audience, to give banquets where the guests are all intellectual and interesting people, and then and there, while sipping good old wine, discourse on genuine Christianity, free from the cobwebs of creed—that indeed is the latest and most pleasant device yet imagined to diffuse the right kind of religion among our fellowmen." He goes on to say: "When Vive Kananda said to his audience at the Detroit Opera House, 'Send to India missionaries like Francis Xavier, who mingled with the downtrodden people,' this was the best illustration of what we need in this country as much as in India. For when Vive Kananda was extolling true Christianity and lauding missionaries like Francis Xavier, the poor of Detroit could not listen to him, because they had not the money to pay for their seats and their clothes were too antiquated to sit with propriety among his well-dressed listeners."

The writer explains Swamiji's affiliation with progressive Christian ministers by stating that he was brought up in a religion which for "6,000 years has divided India into exclusive castes." He then concludes his article with the somewhat irrelevant observation that the "so-called science of the Hindoo sages was looked upon with reverence only so long as it was kept secret," and that submitted to the light of investigation, it was found incapable of producing a single labor-saving device.

This letter was no doubt representative of a popular resentment against "fashionable religion." But in charging Swamiji with religious snobbishness the writer woefully failed to realize, in the first place, that the nonfashionable Christian creeds would not give him a hearing and, in the second place, that Swamiji had asked Christian missionaries to give to the poor in India, not religion but bread. In India both rich and poor alike had religion to spare, whereas in America *both* were in need of it. A further point that might be mentioned here is that in both India and America Swamiji, in the tradition of Hindu monks, accepted the hospitality of rich and poor alike and with equal compassion gave his teachings to both. Quite literally

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he saw the same in all—be they Brahmins or outcastes, industrialists or paupers. This was not true, however, of the Christian missionaries who, professing to serve the poor of India, invariably associated themselves with the English community, whose members lived in a style far grander than that of the most wealthy Hindu.

It is true that Swamiji's Detroit audiences consisted on the whole of "the best people," but it was these very people whom he scolded for the wrongs of Christian civilization. He neither identified himself with them nor did he belabor them in anonymous tirades behind their backs; he spoke directly to them—and they listened and asked for more.

It was at Swamiji's fifth lecture in this city, given at the insistence of his friends, that he blasted the rich for the excessive wealth they had so long believed to be theirs through the will of God. This now famous lecture was delivered at Mrs. Bagley's home on Wednesday afternoon, February 21, and the *Detroit Free Press* report of it has been printed in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works," under the title "Hindus and Christians."

The headlines and first paragraph of the original report are as follows:

IT IS IRONY OF FATE.

Christian Religion Preached in the Name of Luxury.

Idols in India are Nothing but Suggestive Symbols.

The Hindoo Monk Lectured Yesterday
at the home of Mrs. John J. Bagley

The most interesting lecture Vive Kananda has yet delivered was that of yesterday afternoon at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley, on the different Hindoo philosophies. The large rooms were crowded. The monk spoke for two hours about the different philosophies, showing how thousands of years ago the spiritual science of India had reached a condition equal to that of today. As on other occasions the talk was freely interspersed with charming stories from the Sanscrit.

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The lecture was open to the public, but evidently Mrs. Bagley also invited many of her friends. Of this occasion she writes: "I had included lawyers, judges, ministers, army officers, physicians and business-men with their wives and daughters. Vivekananda talked two hours on 'The Ancient Hindu Philosophers and What They Taught.' All listened with intense interest to the end. Wherever he spoke people listened gladly and said, 'I never heard man speak like that.' He does not antagonize, but lifts people up to a higher level—they see something beyond man-made creeds and denominational names, and they feel one with him in their religious beliefs."

"You are not Christians," Swamiji had said at the end of this lecture. "No, as a nation you are not. Go back to Christ! Go back to Him who has nowhere to lay His head. 'The birds have their nests and the beasts their lairs, but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay His head.' Yours is religion preached in the name of luxury. What an irony of fate! Reverse this if you want to live; reverse this. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. If this nation is going to live, go back to Him. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. All this prosperity, all this from Christ! Christ would have denied all such heresies. All prosperity which comes with Mammon is transient, is only for a moment. Real permanence is in Him. If you can join these two, this wonderful prosperity with the ideal of Christ, it is well. But if you cannot, better go back to Him and give this up. Better be ready to live in rags with Christ than to live in palaces without Him."

In this same lecture Swamiji also gave the "blue-nose" ministers and missionaries a bad time. Among other things, he said:

"One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and pay men to do what?—to come over to my country and curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion and my everything. They walk near a temple and say: 'You idolators, you will go to hell.' . . . And then you, who train men to abuse and criticize, if I just touch you with the least bit of criticism, with the kindest of purpose, you shrink and cry: 'Don't touch us; we are Americans.' . . . And whenever your ministers criticise us let them remember this: If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian ocean and throws it up against the western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us."

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Another thing that was to create much commotion in the pulpits was the following:

"With all your brags and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Show me one place in the whole world. One, I say, through the history of the Christian religion—one; I do not want two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be converted or killed; that was all."

I have taken these quotations directly from the *Free Press*. For the most part the lecture as printed in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" follows this report word for word. There is, however, one minor descrepancy that I think should be corrected. In Volume VIII and also in the *Vedanta Kesari* of February 1924 Swamiji is quoted as having said: ". . . we never teach our children to swallow such horrible stuff, that man alone is vile where everything else is pure." What he actually said was: "We never teach our children to swallow such horrible stuff: Where every prospect pleases, and man alone is vile." As the reader will remember, there was a missionary hymn which was often sung sanctimoniously in the nineties and which included the line: "[Where] every prospect pleases and only man is vile." It was to this popular sentiment that Swamiji alluded.

A short report of this same lecture appeared in the *Detroit Journal* of February 22 and is interesting largely because of its headline:

HIS PARTING SHOT

Vive Kananda Delivered His Final Lecture Yesterday.

Monk Kananda delivered his last lecture in Detroit at the residence of Mrs. John J. Bagley yesterday afternoon. In many respects it was the most entertaining lecture of the series. The large rooms and halls of the Bagley mansion were filled to their utmost capacity, and the audience listened for over two hours while this talented orator discussed the different philosophies. The burden of his argument was that the Hindoo never argues that his is the only way to salvation. Vive Kananda made many friends during his brief stay in Detroit, and many were the regrets over his departure.

To judge from the following report in the *Detroit Journal* of

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Friday, February 23, Mrs. Bagley held a small farewell tea for her departing guest:

VIVE KANANDA LEAVES.

He Tells Something About the Conditions of Hindoo Laborers.

Swami Vive Kananda repaid the admiration of his lady acquaintances by writing verses, at the same time religious and semi-sentimental, yesterday afternoon. He departed this morning for Ada, O.

In a conversation concerning the material condition of the Hindu workingmen, the learned monk said that the poor lived on porridge alone. The laborer ate a breakfast of porridge, went off to his daily toil and returned in the evening to another breakfast of porridge and called it dinner. In most of the provinces the farmers were so poor that they could not afford to eat any of the wheat raised. A day laborer on a farm received only 12 pence a day, but a dollar in India brought 10 times as much as it would in this country. Cotton was raised, but its fiber was so short it had to be woven by hand, and even then it was necessary to import American and Egyptian cotton to mix with it.

Swamiji had been in Detroit less than two weeks, but there were, perhaps, few people who had not heard of him. On the evening of his departure, a miniature "Kananda" appeared at a children's "fancy carnival" and was the hit of the evening. The *Detroit Tribune* covered the masquerade as follows:

A PSEUDO KANANDA.

One of the Characters at Strassburg's Children's Party.

The natives of nearly every nation on the globe, as well as many characters of literature and mythology were impersonated in miniature at the children's fancy carnival in

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Strassburg's Hall last night. And among the 200 characters a little prototype of Vive Kananda was the most noticed by the spectators.

The carnival last night was occasioned by the closing of the first quarter's classes of children in the Strassburg [Dancing] Academy. It was one of the social events of the season with the little ladies and gentlemen. [Here follows a description of the various costumes.]

And walking about in all this cosmopolitan throng was the prototype of Vive Kananda, with his orange robe, red sash, and buff colored turban in exact counterfeit of the costume worn by the Hindoo lecturer.

On the morning of Friday, February 23, Swamiji at last left Detroit. He went directly to Ada, Ohio, a small town several hours distant by train, and lectured there that same evening on "The Divinity of Man." Although a report of this lecture should, chronologically, be given here, I believe that it can wait until a later chapter, for it has little bearing on the story of Detroit, with which we are not yet finished.

Presumably when Swamiji left Detroit for Ada, he did not intend to return. He remained in Ada for only a day or two, giving one lecture, and then, as far as can be ascertained, went "home" to the Hales in Chicago. This last assumption is based on two facts; one, Mrs. Florence Bagley Sherman's letter to him, dated February 24, was addressed in care of Mrs. Hale; and two, on March 3 he wrote to India from 541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago—the Hales' home address. But although Swamiji had said goodbye to Detroit, Detroit had not said goodbye to him, for as will be seen in the following chapter, the city continued to quiver under the impact of his recent presence. These repercussions, which threatened to undo his work, were shortly to draw him back into the field to settle, as it were, some unfinished business.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHRISTIAN ONSLAUGHT

I

No sooner had Swamiji left Detroit than the orthodox divines began, as one writer put it, "to pound the dust all out of their pulpit cushions." The five public lectures and the many informal talks he had given, together with the favorable comments in the press, which attested to his strong influence, were more than many a clergyman could endure. Swamiji had undermined the very ground upon which the Christian missionaries had stood for so long. Not only did he teach that no one religion was superior in essence to another, but he pointed out the hypocrisy of Christianity as it was practiced both at home and abroad. Added to this, he repudiated every story of immoral "heathen" practices by which missionary societies had heretofore justified their existence—and Christian nations their right to colonize. Idolatry, the Juggernaut, under the wheels of which Hindus were reputed to be in the habit of flinging themselves, infanticide, the tragic plight of women, the burning of widows—indeed every tale over which Christian missionaries had become hysterical, Swamiji either explained in rational terms or denied utterly.

But the fiction of a degenerate India was the very lifeblood of the more narrow missionary circles, and they had little intention of parting with it. The obvious move was to attack Swamiji with every weapon available. "Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, served at least one good purpose by his recent visit to Detroit," said the *Detroit Journal* of February 26, "for his name and ideas furnished a dozen or more local ministers with themes for their discourses yesterday." Some ministers ranted against him without restraint, others spoke more obliquely, brash oratory being no longer fashionable.

"Some of them Smite Kananda on Hip and Thigh," the *Detroit Journal* quaintly expressed it in headlines. The reader, however, should not be burdened with the full texts of those Sunday smitings. The main points made against Swamiji's lectures revolved around the insistence on the part of the orthodox clergymen that India was *not*

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moral but degenerate and that Christian missionaries were heroes and saints to whom the benighted Hindu should bow down in gratitude and whom the American people should support.

Every tactic was used. One Baptist clergyman, irate over Swamiji's attack on the Christian mode of praying, sententiously declared that the reason "Kananda and his people do not pray at all," is because "their God, Brahma," being without attributes, has no ears.

The Reverend Mr. Newman of the Central Christian Church summed up the attitude of his brethren in the following paragraphs which have been taken from the *Detroit Journal* report of his Sunday sermon:

> "I preach this sermon," he said by way of preface, "because there are many who stand ready to accept as true anything and everything Kananda said while here. I will give the monk credit for believing his own theories, but I do not believe they represent either Hindooism or India." In support of this belief Mr. Newman read numerous extracts from Hindoo authorities. . . . "I am astonished," he went on, "to see the way in which the women of this city ran after Kananda and lauded him to the skies when, if they had been women of his own country, they would have occupied a coop at the rear of the house.
>
> "It is said that a nation's morality may be judged from the condition of its women, and I intend to read to you the condition of women in India." [There follows a long misinterpretation of Hindoo customs, after which the Reverend Mr. Newman concludes triumphantly:] "And still Vive Kananda says it would be a good thing for our missionaries to go over there and take a few lessons on morality."

In Ypsilanti, a city in Michigan near Detroit, not only Swamiji but his friends, the Reverend Mr. Stuart of the Unitarian Church and Rabbi Grossman, came in for a long sermon. It will be remembered that in his talk on Sunday, February 17, Rabbi Grossman had highly praised Swamiji and had rebuked the Christian churches for squandering the good money and good will of the American people in proselytizing work far from home, "while all along our poor were at our door." "How in this good and sympathetic country of ours,"

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the rabbi had said, "such an illusion, I will not say delusion, could enthrall the robust and sound-sensed citizens, I do not understand." This, together with the Reverend Mr. Stuart's equally high praise of Swamiji and equally damning criticism of the Christian missionaries, could not be let pass without rejoinder. Forthwith the Rev. H. M. Morey of Ypsilanti, who had evidently been reading the Detroit papers, delivered a Sunday retort. I will spare the reader the full text of his sermon, which was given in the *Detroit Tribune* of February 26, for it was long and filled with the usual indictment of Hinduism and the usual praise of the missionary "heroes" who "have told us of the sufferings and sorrows of humanity, not in the self-righteous spirit suggested by the Brahmin, but with tenderness in the voice and with tears in their eyes."

The Rev. Mr. Morey accused Swamiji and his supporters of telling only "half-truths," which "may sometimes do the work of lies and slanders." For instance, both Rabbi Grossman and the Reverend Mr. Stuart had suggested that there was as much immorality in America as in India—if not more. Said Morey:

> "There are half-truths here, but these men of thought should have discriminated. Drunkenness and licentiousness and cruelty exist in Detroit under the shadow of churches. They exist also in Calcutta. Here they are contrary to Christianity and are the remains of the native barbarism not yet extinguished by Christianity. There they exist in the temples of the gods, sanctioned by their example and precepts. In India the people have only to follow the examples of their gods to become drunken and licentious. I wish to deal fairly in this matter and not to deal in half-truths."

According to the Reverend Mr. Morey, Swamiji also dealt in half-truths:

> "Vive Kananda was asked some questions which he answered in the pulpit. He answered with a display of humor and apparent frankness that may deceive. 'Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of crocodiles?' 'Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of Juggernaut?' 'Do they burn widows with their husbands?' He ridicules the

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ideas, and denies the fact except in exceedingly rare and exceptional cases. He has told a truth or a half-truth and in such a way as to justify the claim of the rabbi that it is a 'delusion' to send missionaries to India."

The Reverend Mr. Morey went on to say that while these "horrible rites" (upon which he enlarged at length) no longer exist, their suppression has been due solely to "the direct and indirect influence of the 'delusion' as the rabbi calls christian missions." Indeed, by the time Morey was through, India had nothing whatsoever in her favor except the presence of Christian missionaries.

The following Sunday an editorial which ran in two papers, the *Detroit Tribune* and the *Sunday News Tribune,* evinced some surprise that the ministry had reacted to Swamiji with so much hysteria:

VIVE KANANDA

No hurt can yet come to any truth by stirring up the turbid streams of opinion. No evil has resulted to humanity since the days of creation by agitating the sources of religious belief. The pool of Bethesda had no healing power till the angel had troubled its waters, and no doctrine, dogma, creed or item of faith is too sacred to be troubled by the spirit of inquiry and examined with a view of finding upon what it rests.

It does not seem to the secular intellect as though christianity could be imperiled by the public lectures of a single benighted Hindu who stands up and in good queen's English gives some reasons why he thinks the religion of his country has hardly been judged fairly by the missionaries who have been sent to India. The natural man can hardly perceive why a dozen or score of talented and orthodox divines, brightest examples of christian learning and culture, should consider it needful to pound the dust all out of their pulpit cushions in declaiming against one poor pagan who stands alone to defend his ancestral religion in a country where he is surrounded by millions upon millions of christians, and where the fixed habits and customs and social and religious life of the people have been moulded by generations of christians and christian teachers.

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It ought to be very safe for christians who know what they believe and why they believe it to hear Vive Kananda or anybody else. If they carry their faith around on a plate and it is liable to slip off at the least joggle, it is high time for it to be joggled.

Plainly speaking, it does not seem to be worthy of the dignity of christian clergymen in a great city to leave all other topics and cry out with one voice against any unbeliever who may chance to speak publicly against the prevailing religion of the churches. It is not worth while for a clergyman who respects the intelligence of his hearers to declare that there is only one religion in the world. Most men carry brains around with them all through the week, and they can be trusted to cling to the doctrines which they understand and believe. It is vain and foolish to undertake to smother discussion. It is ridiculous for a protestant clergyman to lay down a rule that the faithful of his flock shall hear only those preachers with whom they are in entire accord. There may not be much use in religious controversy, but there is a great deal of use in getting at other people's thoughts and ways of thinking. A late revered and admired bishop in Michigan said in connection with his reading of books upon oriental faiths that "the time had come when religion must be studied comparatively." Vive Kananda has helped us in such a study.

Clearly, the writer of the above editorial did not grasp the main issue. There was every reason for the more narrow clergymen to declaim against Swamiji, for theirs was a creed from which the age itself was moving away. The American people were, on the whole, searching for a more liberal and more rational faith, one which would be applicable to an expanding world, and Swamiji was the very personification of that faith. He himself later wrote: "The orthodox section of this country are crying for help. . . . they are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, 'What a pest! Thousands of men and women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!'" The word "pest" was an understatement. To every narrow mind, Swamiji was a *bête noire* to be eliminated at any cost.

With this aim in mind, the Baptists of Detroit held a mass meeting on March 5. Among the speakers was a Dr. W. E. Boggs of

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Cincinnati, Ohio, who had spent several years in India and could therefore, it was presumed, speak with authority. "India is the most idolatrous land on the face of the earth," he declared. "The land is full of idols, not only in the temples, but by the wayside, on the tank embankments, at the public wells, in the fields, in their houses, idols of all sorts representing gods and goddesses, fabulous creatures, and beasts and reptiles. Many of these images are monstrous, repulsive, obscene. . . . All the foulest crimes that have ever entered into the imagination of man are to be found in the characters of some of the divinities that they worship."

Dr. Boggs next took up the caste system, "one of the masterpieces of Satan," wherein he found a weapon with which to deliver a blow at Swamiji. "The Brahmans," he said, "look with unconcealed disdain upon those of the lower castes and will tell you it is 'physically nauseating, etc.' And these are the men that will come to this country and talk with mellifluous words about the 'Brotherhood of Man.' It is just as consistent for a Brahman to talk about the brotherhood of man as it would be for a Japanese to boast that chastity and moral purity are a distinguishing characteristic of his nation. . . ."

"There is no saving light in Hinduism," concluded Dr. Boggs. "There is no Savior in Hinduism. Christ alone can save India. . . . The need of Christian missions in India was never exaggerated and never can be. The need was never greater than it is today."

A Dr. Mabie and a Dr. Gordon spoke in somewhat the same vein at the Baptist mass meeting, Dr. Gordon concluding his talk with the following remarks: "I never believed in parliaments of religion because all forms of religion aside from christianity are counterfeits. There is every evidence that all religions except that which treats of the one Christ are bogus. We had better stand by the religion of Jesus Christ. We must still send out missionaries and have an abundance of faith."

This was the crux of the matter: the missionaries not only must go out, but must go out as God's elect. That a heathen should be preaching religion in the West, that he should be followed and revered by thousands, was an intolerable, unforgivable affront. Indeed, it was worse than an affront, it was a lethal blow.

There was perhaps no meeting of missionaries in Detroit which did not discuss and attack Swamiji during his absence. One such meeting was reported in the *Detroit Tribune* of March 8:

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MIGHT AS WELL BE BURNED

Another Indian Missionary Talks of Kananda's Ideas.

The Missionary Society of the Fort Street Presbyterian Church held its annual meeting at the residence of Allan Shelden, West Fort street, yesterday afternoon. Rev. J. F. Dickie read the scripture lesson and Rev. Mr. Edwards led in prayer.... Mrs. Harvey, the president, made a short address and then introduced Rev. Dr. Thackwell, who has been a missionary in India for 45 years, under the presbyterian board.

Dr. Thackwell said he thought that the work of the foreign missionary was the greatest work in the world.... In speaking of the former habit of burning widows alive, he said that some of them question whether their condition was changed any or not by the law. Before they knew their fate, but now it is a living death. Some people may come over here, as did Kananda, and say that the widow's position is improved, but if it is true then the word of all returned missionaries is untrue. The widow is stripped of her jewels and her finery and a coarse garment placed upon her and she is thenceforth the Cinderella of the family. The belief in regard to their being burned was that the gods were displeased and to insure the husband's salvation his widow must die.

Many female babies are strangled to death, in some cases by their mothers. Marriage and death are principal causes of the national poverty. The son is not exempt from the debts of his forefathers. The girl upon marriage has to be furnished a dower and in order to avoid it, the females are murdered by the thousands. The Brahmins have never tried to prevent these atrocities, but the English government is using its influence to stop them. The Brahmins have not much power in the cities but flourish in the outlying country, where the missionaries have not yet established themselves....

The women uphold their religion because they have more religious fervor and are entirely sincere. The mother brings her little ones to the idol and teaches them to worship it and thus through a mother's constant devotion and influence another idolator is reared. It is the women that must be

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reached and when they are converted to Christ they will bring up their children in the new faith.

The greatest men of India will attend receptions given by the viceroy. They will come in their richest costumes and chat with the Europeans, but on going home they divest themselves of their clothing and bathe, to rid themselves of the pollution.... The Hindu idea of God is that He is wrathful and thirsty for human blood, that He is ready to wreak His vengeance and they must appease Him. Among various methods to attain His pleasure is to lie naked on a plank studded with sharp nails, to hold an arm or leg up until the limb becomes withered. They punish their bodies for the sin of their souls. If they will come over to the side of christianity they will become a power for good. [And so on.]

But rant as the missionaries would, it was too late. Swamiji had cast a doubt upon all their false tales, and few who had heard him were willing to listen to the old cry. A letter printed in the *Detroit Journal* of March 15, in answer to Rev. Dr. Thackwell, gives an idea of how things were faring.

FROM THE MAIL BAG

Foreign Missions.

Editor Journal.—It seems that Kananda, the Hindoo preacher, has stirred up the antagonism of many Christian ministers. At the home of Mrs. Shelden last Wednesday, the ladies of the Foreign missionary society met and listened to an address by Mr. Thackwell, a missionary from India. He contradicted Kananda's statement that it was the Hindoos who abolished the custom of burning widows in India. Who would be most likely to know best? One who has been there as a missionary, or one who was born on the banks of the Ganges, traveled all over the country and lived there all his life; a man of learning, who could have no object in making a false statement? We have been told again and again, that the overthrow of that custom was one of the blessed effects of Christian missionary work. But here comes a native missionary

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from India, who tells us it was the Brahmins who put a stop to the horrid custom.

We have also been taught from our early youth that Hindu mothers throw their children to crocodiles in the river Ganges. But now a man who was born on the banks of that river tells us that there was never a crocodile in the Ganges. It is possible that the Rev. Thackwell's statement that Hindu mothers strangle their own babies has no more foundation in truth. Mr. Thackwell says it was the English government that abolished the custom of burning widows in India. But we all know how ready Christian England is to credit herself with any good done, or evil overthrown in her provinces. If England put a stop to that wicked custom, it must have been because she could make no money out of it. She sends out shiploads of liquor with agents to distribute and sell it. She could gain more dollars by making widows through the liquor traffic. India did not want her liquor any more than the Chinese wanted her opium, but she forced the opium trade on China at the mouth of the cannon, and her liquor trade through distributing agents in India. England is a field greatly in need of missionary work and the foreign missionary society ought not to pass it by.

It costs on an average twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars a head for every heathen convert made. This is very expensive and we do not wonder that every available means are resorted to for the purpose of raising money. Collections of pennies from Sabbath school children, and missionary collections in churches, after listening to a sermon in which the sad condition of the poor heathens who strangle their babes and feed the crocodiles with their children are pictured and the sympathies of the audience are aroused. Dr. Gordon, a member of a church in Boston and an officer of the Foreign missionary society, tells us how they manage to raise money. They pray every day for a month and then take up a $ 20,000 collection. He boasts that by this means they get from poor servant girls $ 50, and from one poor old lady living in a tenement house, who only had a thousand dollars to live on all the rest of her days, they managed to get $ 800—see the Journal of March 6. Now if there is a spot on God's green

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earth where missionary work is most needed, it must be Dr. Gordon's church in Boston.

The means employed to obtain this money might be prayer, sympathy, hypnotism or the muzzle of a revolver. In a moral point of view it is equally wrong and no more justified than highway robbery. It is at home where true Christian missionary work is most needed, not only in the slums of our cities, but among the 400 in Boston, Chicago and New York; not only among our heathen Indians, who have been robbed and destroyed by American Christians, but many of the professed Christian churches of this land need to be taught the first principles of a true Christianity, justice, righteousness and brotherly love.

J. STEELE.

II

Either by chance or by design the Student Volunteer Missionary Movement held its second international convention in Detroit shortly after Swamiji had left. The convention, a gathering of no small proportions and no little significance, was in full sway from February 28 to March 4. According to the *Michigan Christian Advocate* of March 10:

> ... Never before had Detroit been favored with a convention so large in point of numbers, and at the same time of so wide scope and far-reaching significance. As a missionary convention it was not only the largest and most important ever held in Detroit, but the greatest ever held on this continent, and one of the greatest distinctly missionary gatherings that has ever convened in the world.... The registration lists showed a total of 1,187 accredited delegates present, representing 294 separate institutions of learning, and 38 different denominations. Besides these, some 50 secretaries or representatives of missionary societies; over 50 returned missionaries; representatives of the Y. M. C. A. and other organizations, swelled the grand total of registered members of the convention to 1,357....

Meetings took place in the Central Church, which overflowed

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with missionaries and spectators until, after the first day, additional meetings were held in other churches to accommodate the crowd. "The local committee," says the *Michigan Christian Advocate,* "were taxed to their wits' end to find entertainment for so many, but the Christian people of Detroit arose to the occasion and all were comfortably taken care of." The article continues:

> It was indeed a grand sight, and one calculated to quicken the pulse and stir the blood of any person interested in the great missionary movements for the world's evangelization, to look into the faces of those 1,200 earnest young men and women, all turning toward the foreign mission field for their life work. These young people represented about 300 institutions of learning, including every such institution of any importance in the United States and Canada. They were in an important sense the picked men and women of these institutions. Seldom does one see such a body of young people. A high intellectual average, intense earnestness of purpose, and a deep consecration to God and his work were marked characteristics. It was manifest that they were here, not on a mere holiday outing, but on serious business—to gain inspiration and learn how to best prepare to take their place in the work of winning this world for Christ.

It was a formidable gathering. And whether or not the delegates mustered in such large numbers as an answer to the Parliament of Religions, they considered that their convention in Detroit was an answer to Swamiji. The *Christian Advocate* editorialized:

> What a splendid antidote the convention was for Vive Kananda and his lectures! Came just in the nick of time. The glamour produced by his suave sophistries vanished like mist before the stalwart faith and living experience of men who have met and coped with heathenism on its own ground. *Vale* Kananda!

Vale Kananda, indeed! The fact was that, although the convention may have sought to counteract Swamiji's influence, it was itself not uninfluenced by him. A new note, commented upon by the missionaries themselves, sounded throughout the proceedings. Far less

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emphasis than had been customary at such meetings was laid upon the external aspect of Christian missionary endeavor in foreign lands and far more upon the inner spirit. To quote again from the *Christian Advocate* of March 10:

> The watchwords of the movement were set forth in large printed letters stretched along the galleries: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations"; "Let us advance upon our knees." . . .
>
> Among the features that marked the convention, there was none more prominent, or that more profoundly impressed all in attendance, than the intensely spiritual tone that pervaded it. This stood out above everything else. Education, culture, methods, finance, and all the other secularities, were remanded to their rightful and subordinate places, and from first to last, by every speaker with scarce an exception, the thought was kept uppermost that the indwelling Christ and the baptism and fullness of the Holy Ghost constitute the one essential fitness, the prime necessity, the only source of power and guarantee of success. . . . From first to last, the clarion call was for Spirit-filled men and women. A Methodist could almost imagine himself in a holiness convention throughout the whole meeting. This emphasis laid upon the spiritual side in this great missionary movement is full of significance and fraught with momentous promise. A movement that thus honors the Holy Ghost cannot but succeed. . . .

Even from the missionaries in India the message came that the spiritual side of things was in order. "That was a stirring cablegram read by Chairman Mott at the farewell meeting, from Wilder and White in Calcutta," commented the *Christian Advocate*: "'India needs now 1,000 Spirit-filled volunteers.'"

It is not too difficult to believe that this sudden surge of spiritual earnestness both at home and abroad was due to Swamiji's many reminders that something of the sort was called for in missionary activity. If the watchword, "Let us advance upon our knees," was an "antidote" to him, it was one that could only have gratified him, provided it was carried out in the true spirit. It was, however, not the convention's only answer to Swamiji. Although public repudiations of his views are not available, they were unquestionably delivered by

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the delegates, for, as will be seen, they were at least partly the cause of Swamiji's return to Detroit.

In the meantime, his first visit to the city was already bearing fruit. In the very teeth of the missionary convention the *Evening News* of March 1 published a long illustrated article that unmercifully ridiculed the tall tales of missionary propaganda—particularly those in Caleb Wright's book, "India and Its Inhabitants," a book which had been published in the 1850's and which formed part of the mental framework of the generation that had grown up under its spell. "India and Its Inhabitants" has been referred to before (Chapter Four) as one of the most potent weapons of the Christian missionaries. Its lurid illustrated tales of heathen mothers throwing their newborn infants to the crocodiles and of wild-eyed Hindus flinging themselves beneath the crushing wheels of the Juggernaut had been read and reread, had been believed as gospel truth and had deposited a good deal of debris in the American mind, which only a hard jolt could dislodge. Swamiji had delivered that jolt; whereupon the *Evening News*, which was known in those days as a "sensational" paper and which took delight in shocking its subscribers out of their accustomed grooves of thought, followed up with an exposé of Caleb Wright and his ilk. The article need not be quoted in full; the closing paragraphs will be sufficient to show that public opinion was undergoing a radical change and also that, now and then, a modern American missionary gave testimony to the truth of Swamiji's assertions. The editorial concluded:

> In a work written by Rev. A. D. Rowe, an American missionary, and published by the American Tract society, his introduction says:
>
> "There is an India of the books and there is a real India, and so different are the two that the student of the one would hardly recognize the other, if without a guide he should suddenly find himself in a Hindoo village. These books," he says, "have been written by European travelers, who confined themselves to main routes of travel, the cities and the larger towns, where they see but little undisguised Hindoo life. Many of these books seem to have been made with the aim of astonishing rather than instructing the reader, and they leave on the mind an impression that India is a country where women are caged up like parrots, where widows are burned alive, and children are hung up in baskets to be eaten by

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birds, or thrown into the Ganges to be eaten by crocodiles; that it is inhabited chiefly by voluptuous native princes, self-torturing religious devotees, powwowing Brahmin priests, jewel-bedecked dancing girls, and ferocious Bengal tigers. Of the millions of soberminded, toiling fellow human beings, with hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, sympathies and ambitions common to all mankind, little or nothing is said.

"The school children of America know more about the burning of widows and the drowning of infants in India than do the fathers of an ordinary Hindoo village. These things are as surprising to the young Hindoo as they are to the young American. I do not say that these accounts are literally untrue, but they put too much stress upon characters and topics that are of comparatively little importance to the life of the masses."

A captain of one of the Peninsular & Oriental steamers told Thomas W. Knox that an American passenger on board his ship was very much disappointed when he heard that he would not see a widow burned or a pilgrim crushed by the car of Juggernaut. He was very angry, and said all the poetry of the east was gone, and he wished he had never left home.

Appearing on the same page with the above article was a poem entitled "Christian and Heathen" by J. W. W.

CHRISTIAN AND HEATHEN

When Chapman waved the christian banner
In a mild and graceful manner, . . .
Stirring souls of men and women
Up against the dreadful foeman.
"In hoc signo vinces" shouted,
Showed that dangers all were scouted;
That the foe was wholly routed.

But, alas! that prince of evil,
Most properly yclept the devil,
Sly old barbed-tailed, split-hoofed minion,
Issued from his hot dominion
Full of argument and knowledge,

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Gathered in Experience college,
Came within these precincts urban,
Wearing flowing robes and turban;
Hoofs and tail beneath them hid he,
Called himself Kananda did he,
Put his Hindoo logic neatly,
And overthrew our force completely.

All was silence round about us—
The heathen monk, by George, did rout us—
And we were feeling rather sickly
'Till other forces gathered quickly.
They rose like locusts in the air,
Aspiring like a heartfelt prayer;
And here they are from hills and prairies,
Bold-hearted College Missionaries!
Hip! Hip! Hur—stay, our great rejoicing
May have a slightly hasty voicing;
Our solid front may still be hollow,
As who knows, brethren, what may follow?. . .
Therefore let us wait the ending,
Our posts most quietly defending.

III

"Our solid front may still be hollow, as who knows, brethren, what may follow?" What followed was Swamiji's reappearance on March ninth after a two-weeks' absence. This was an unscheduled visit—neither planned by Swamiji nor expected by the missionaries. To all intents and purposes, Swamiji had left Detroit for good, possibly to return to India. Thus his reappearance must have come as a shock to many of his adversaries. He was greeted by various articles and letters in the Detroit newspapers, which reflected the general excitement over the return of the warrior monk. The following item appeared in the *Evening News* of March 10:

CHRISTIAN ECCENTRICITIES.

Very likely they don't do these things any better in India; but it must be confessed that it is a little awkward to

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have that Hindoo turn up again in Detroit the same week that three policemen had to be on duty at a christian church for the purpose of keeping order among its members, seated in hostile array and ready for an outbreak on opposite sides of the room. Then, the policemen, at the request of one of this flock, went round with him to the house of his shepherd to pay him a month's salary, but evidently afraid to do so without having witnesses to his act. Perhaps he wanted the protection of the strong arm of the law lest his minister should assault him and take away the money and then refuse to give him an acknowledgment of the payment. The Lutheran minister did refuse to give him a receipt that evening because, as he put it, these dissatisfied parishioners had long withheld his pay and it would be no great hardship to make them wait for the receipt overnight at least.

There are thousands of peaceful congregations, millions of christians in and out of the church, that trust each other respectfully; confide in each other's honor; pay their debts and need no policemen to regulate the conduct of their religious affairs. But at the same time, suppose this casual Hindoo should mistake the exception for the rule, and hold christianity responsible for all its failures. What a nuisance he might make of himself!

An open letter welcoming Swamiji was published in the *Detroit Critic* of March 11. It was written by O. P. Deldoc, the same who had earlier written letters to the *Free Press* in Swamiji's defense and who had a flair all his own for the English language. O. P. Deldoc was evidently a pen name, for it cannot be found in the Detroit registers for 1894. But whoever he may have been, his pen was prolific and vigorous and, to judge from the fact that the *Detroit Critic* published his letters and articles, he was known in literary and intellectual circles. In any case, Deldoc's outlook upon the current state of civilization in the United States was by no means singular, but represented the liberal thought of the day. His welcoming letter, which gives a picture of the unrest of the age, illustrates the fact that the voices which cheered Swamiji were every bit as loud and angry as those which decried him. Feelings ran high in Detroit. The letter, too long to present here in all its verbosity, began as follows:

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"HYPOCRITS"

The Christian Religion
Has Very Many of Them
Who Hide Their Heads behind Its Convenient Cloak.

Hail Vive Kananda, the Hindoo.

A Nervy Writer Discusses the Abuse of Kananda
With a Very Bitter Pen.

Some Truths Which are Very Hard to Swallow.

An Open Letter to Vive Kananda.

Dear Swami:

I rejoice to see that you are in the missionary field again in this part of our immoral vineyard. Truly "the harvest is great, and the laborers are few." We need more laborers in the harvest.

"There's a cry to Macedonia, come and help us,
The light of the Gospel bring; oh! come."

True, we have had the great Chapman revival here, but the sheaves that were garnered would not fill one stall of the barn where his services were held. Missionary Stead has just shaken the dust of the most noted and wickedest city on earth from his brogans, and by this time is half seas over, and Chicago is unconverted. The Baptist brethren have failed to make cold water converts out of Detroit's ardent Spiritualists. The missionary convention brought forth a small army of raw recruits for service, but they were too green to make palatable roast missionary of, though they thought themselves capable of "roasting the heathen." Soon we are to have the Christian Endeavor Society, to endeavor to see what they can do, but alas! all their endeavors are directed to foreign shores. They want to send more missionaries to convert more heathen, and they want to raise more money to purchase more tracts, plug hats, and suspenders for "those poor men benighted, where only man is vile." In their eagerness to go abroad, they forget

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that both man and woman are vile in their own country, and require much missionary work right at home. I rejoice to see that you are in the field. We need you, . . . and we find by more than eighteen hundred years of past experience that we cannot depend upon our own missionaries. . . .

You don't begin to know how vile the heathen are here, even though they dwell in the light of the nineteenth century. . . . We want some missionaries from India and China, and we want them bad, or rather, we want them good, ours are bad enough. . . . Your religion for thousands of years has been one of mercy and love. Of humility and truth. Of science, logic and law. Ours is one of bigotry, persecution, war, blood and hatred. One of fable and fallacy. Of fraud and hypocrisy. "Prove it"; why certainly. . . .

Deldoc then proceeded to catalogue most colorfully the iniquities of American civilization. "In the first place," he says, "we worship idols. The idols are in silver and gold. . . . Other idolaters worship at the shrine of Venus and Bacchus. . . . Murder, bloodshed, riot, anarchy, cruelty to animals; yes, and cruelty to wife and children, whom they treat as slaves. . . . Patriotism wades knee-deep in human blood. Blood is the fundamental basis of our religion." He goes on to enumerate and castigate many a practice of nineteenth-century America: Child-murder, so common as to be unnoticed. Female slavery and child slavery. "Sweathouses," suicides; caste in society, state and church. Bribery and corruption in politics, press and pulpit. "We hang, burn and torture criminals. We suffer mob law and violence to rule over us. We build prisons and mad houses, and keep them full to overflowing. . . . We have opium eaters in our most fashionable circles." Highway robbery, polygamy, prostitution alarmingly prevail. Vile dens of infamy are rented by pew-holders. "Our clergymen are not all saints; they too frequently 'fall from grace,' but when they lose caste here, they can be utilized in foreign missionary service. Our females are in such abject slavery that they have to organize Women's Rights societies to petition legislature to redress their wrongs. . . . As a result of all this moral depravity, we have starvation, beggary, and crime. Strikes and labor riots are common everyday occurrences among the lower caste. . . ." Deldoc, having left American civilization little cause to raise its head, concludes his letter with a finishing blow:

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Besides, we find the clerical cloak, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. One minister recently said, when asked what he thought you would do with the money gained from your lectures, that "you would probably stick to it." How well he knew the inner mysteries of missionary work; but it was unwise to give the snap away. Their whole attention now seems to center in India, instead of among the cannibals, possibly for the reason that your people don't eat flesh, and they are safer among the mild-mannered natives of India.

These, dear Swami, are a few briefly noted facts, susceptible of ocular demonstration, which even in your short sojourn amongst us you must have noticed. Our watchmen on the walls of Zion have reviled you, figuratively speaking, have kicked you behind your back, and are "bearing false witness" against their neighbor in your own and other lands. . . . Where shall we look for help in this our time of need? We hopefully turn with anxious eyes to the Orient, or to the "wise men of the east," where the Star of Bethlehem arose, and where God's bright sunlight ever dawns. If you have a purer religion than we, and surely you can have none practically worse, I beseech you come over and help us.

Yours, for human brotherhood,
O. P. DELDOC.

The equally vehement opposition was represented by "Occidental" whom readers will remember as a friend of the missionaries who did not deem it necessary to hear Swamiji speak in order to judge him. Occidental appears, to say the least, somewhat fanatical; yet one cannot on this account ignore his, or her, letters, for they were as representative of contemporary thought as were the writings of Deldoc. The following was written on March 10, the day after Swamiji's return to Detroit, and appeared in the *Free Press* of March 12:

Kananda Again In Our Midst.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

"That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and yet to stand."

Is it reasonable to suppose for an instant that among 360,000,000 of Vishnu's followers, clever volunteers were not

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offered or selections made according to the eastern standard of wiliness or craftiness for representatives to the "World's Congress of Religious Bodies?"

"We wrestle against spiritual darkness in high places." Be not deceived. You will not (though this being your purpose appears questionable) be able to convert Kananda. Such is my sincere belief, but he may do incalculable mischief. "Judge of the trees by their fruits." Compare the fruits of Christianity with those of Brahminism. On the one hand, enlightenment, progressiveness, joy, comforts and good will towards men ; not absolute but comparative. On the other hand, darkness, dreariness, misery, and for good will towards men, good will towards dogs, cats and cobras ; not absolute, but comparative.

That any intelligent person can for a moment give greater credence to the statements of a Hindoo (educated or not) than to the numerous counter-statements of our own educated men and women, travelers, missionaries or what not, surpasses strangeness. And yet many are ready to argue that the stories we hear of infanticide, widow immolation, and other conditions of misery among the Hindoos, are greatly exaggerated. In this connection please bear in mind that many of the stories we hear only claim to relate to periods prior to England's control of India's affairs ; and we all know or should know, of their improvement since.

For my part my fears have been aroused recently so as to have produced a well-grounded belief that some of these stories are rather minimized than exaggerated at this time. . . . Within a week a man told me that when he was an officer of a vessel some years ago, at the mouth of the Hoogley river, about thirty miles below Calcutta, he was obliged to have his mooring lines cleared of the floating bodies of dead infants. For those unfamiliar with the facts, it is necessary to state that the mouth of the Hoogley river swarmed with crocodiles then, 1854, much as our own Mississippi did with alligators twenty-five years ago, when the writer saw at one glance of the eye say twenty alligators when there was a chance of their getting anything to eat, in the moat at Port Jackson, half of them large enough to swallow an infant. Whether the river outside the moat was as thick with them or not, he is unable

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to say, but one scarcely ever rode along this part of the Mississippi on warm days without seeing one or more of them roll off the logs into the river. The number of infanticides in Calcutta and along the river above and below can only be approximated by persons for themselves from these data; taking into consideration the time necessary for a body to rise to the surface and float thirty miles more or less, and the uncertainty of its even reaching the mouth and there becoming stranded on a vessel's mooring lines, in order that eight infant's bodies should thus have become stranded in the seven weeks time that the vessel was there.

One of the missionaries in our city last week, being interrogated on the subject of shocking infanticide in India now by another lady, answered thus: "Why, of course it is true, how could it be otherwise? Don't you know that the words virtue and morality have no meaning with the Hindoos, they are as much worse than the Chinese and Japanese as you can imagine." For those who may not appreciate this comparison, we must speak plainly. In Japan, when a man takes a fancy to a flower girl or tea girl he can negotiate with her parents for her services as a concubine about as we might negotiate for the services of a young girl as a domestic. The inquirer then said, "But Kananda denies all this," to which the missionary replied by smiling, shrugging her shoulders and saying, with as much doubt in her looks as possible, "Perhaps he doesn't know."

Horror of horrors! Wholesale infanticide, cobras, crocodiles and wilful falsehood? Does the witches' cauldron in Macbeth equal this? One hardly knows though, whether to find greater fault with the educated heathen for deliberately falsifying, or with the missionary for failing to state plainly that such was her belief.

"False in one thing, false in all." Therefore, unless you have confirmatory evidence from other sources, please take all Kananda's statements *cum grano salis* (with salt); and for the love of heaven, let us have the plain truth.

OCCIDENTAL.

The above letter is so palpably malicious that no comment is really called for. Perhaps, however, the inconsistencies involved in it

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should be pointed out. One finds it difficult to understand, for instance, why Occidental thought it necessary to dwell at such length upon those swarms of crocodiles in the mouth of the Hoogley River and of alligators in the Mississippi in order to prove his thesis that the Hindus had a propensity to commit infanticide. It would seem that those crocodiles showed a marked indifference to the infant bodies. Or did Occidental mean to imply that the bodies were so numerous that hundreds of crocodiles were unable to cope with all of them? Actually, all that one can gather from the officer's story, assuming that it was true, is that some bodies of infants had floated down the Ganges and had found their way to the officer's moorings. It is a mystery, however, how the officer, or for that matter, Occidental, knew in what manner those infants had met their death. Any one who is not eager to prove the terrible character of Hindu mothers can manage to think of causes of death other than murder and of causes for those bodies having been in the river other than infanticide. But since reason was not a prominent ingredient in the concocting of missionary propaganda, it is perhaps too much to expect a rational statement from Occidental and his friends. One thing, however, is clear: Swamiji's second visit to Detroit was by no means welcomed by everyone.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

RETURN OF THE WARRIOR

I

The first lecture Swamiji gave on his return to Detroit might very well have been the reason for that return, for it was a direct reply to his antagonists. Not only had local orthodox clergymen attacked him vigorously, but the missionaries and missionary students, who had considered their convention an antidote to his lectures, had surely left nothing unsaid in the effort to counteract his influence. No doubt Swamiji's friends had relayed to him the criticisms made in his absence, and had implored him to return to give answer. An announcement in the *Detroit Journal* of March 9, corroborates this supposition.

KANANDA AGAIN

The Hindu Will Speak at the Detroit Opera House.

Vive Kananda, the Hindu monk, will return to Detroit to-night from Chicago, and will be the guest either of Mrs. John J. Bagley or Hon. T. W. Palmer. Next Sunday evening Kananda will lecture at the Detroit opera house on "Christian Missions in India," his subject suggested by the convention of student volunteers held here last week.

Falsehood and hypocrisy always aroused the warrior in Swamiji, and one is reminded in this connection of a letter he wrote the following year in which he said: "The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression." It must have been obvious to him that his opponents in Detroit were in need of a finishing blow, and thus he returned, not to defend himself but to defend the truth; not in anger but in valor. "Christian Missions in India," delivered on March 11, was his answer.

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The *Detroit Free Press* report of this lecture has been reprinted, with some variations, in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" under the title, "Christianity in India." The headlines and first two paragraphs, which have been omitted in Volume VIII, read as follows:

NOT EASY TO CONVERT

The People of India Take the Bait
But not the Hook.

Missionaries are not in Sympathy with the People.

Do not Speak the Language or Understand the Natives.

Vive Kananda spoke to a crowded audience at the Detroit Opera House last night. He was given an extremely cordial reception and delivered his most eloquent address here. He spoke for two hours and a half.

Hon. T. W. Palmer, in introducing the distinguished visitor, referred to the old tale of the shield that was copper on one side and silver on the other and the contest which ensued. If we look on both sides of a question there would be less dispute. It is possible for all men to agree. The matter of foreign missions has been dear to the religious heart. Vive Kananda, from the Christian standpoint, said Mr. Palmer, was a pagan. It would be pleasant to hear from a gentleman who spoke about the copper side of the shield.

Vive Kananda was received with great applause. . . .

The *Detroit Tribune* report of this same lecture caught many of Swamiji's sentences that were missed by the *Free Press* and reads as follows:

KANANDA, THE PAGAN

Attacked Christian Missions in Last Night's Lecture.

And His Words were Warmly Applauded by the Audience.

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Christian Nations Kill and Murder, He Said, and Import Disease into Foreign Countries, then Add Insult to Injury by Preaching of a Crucified Christ.

Swami Vive Kananda lectured to a very large audience at the Detroit Opera House last night on "Christian Missions in India." One could believe that the lecture was intended as an answer to the many statements of missionaries which have been aimed at Kananda during the past two weeks in this city.

Kananda was introduced by Honorable Thomas W. Palmer last night, who recited a fable by way of preface. "Two knights of honor once met on the field," he said, "and seeing a shield hanging on a tree they halted. One said: 'What a very fine silver shield.' The other replied that it was not silver but copper. Each disputed the other's statement until at last they got off their horses, tied them to the tree, and drawing their swords fought for several hours. After they were both well spent by the loss of blood they staggered against each other and fell on the opposite sides from where they had been fighting. Then one glanced up at the pendant shield and said: 'You were right, my friend. The shield is copper.' The other looked up and said: 'It is I who was mistaken. The shield is silver.' If they had looked at both sides of the shield in the first place it would have saved the loss of much blood. I think that if we looked at both sides of every question there would be less argument and fighting.

"We have with us tonight a gentleman who, from the christian standpoint is, I suppose, a pagan. But he belongs to a religion which was old long before ours was thought of by men. I am sure that it will be pleasant to hear from the copper side of the shield. We have looked at it only from the silver side. Ladies and Gentlemen, Swami Vive Kananda."

Kananda, who had remained seated on the stage during Mr. Palmer's remarks, stepped to the front, clad in the orange robe and unique turban of the Brahman priest, bowed in acknowledgement of the welcoming applause, and launched at once into his subject.

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What India Is.

"I do not know about the efforts of christian missionaries in China and Japan except through reading the books and literature on the subject, but I can speak about the efforts of christianizing India. But before I go into this I want to place before you an idea of what India is."

Then he explained in detail how the 300,000,000 inhabitants of India are divided into castes, between which there can be no affiliation, how the natives of the south cannot understand the language of the ones of the north, and vice versa. He told how the lower caste lived on the flesh of dead animals, and never bathed their bodies, and how impossible it would be for the higher class to mingle with them, although they were granted the protection of the same laws.

He referred to the first appearance of the christians in an attempt to evangelize the followers of Buddah. They were Spaniards, he said, and they discovered a temple near Ceylon, in which was presented a tooth of Buddah as a sacred relic.

"The Spaniard christians thought that their God commanded them to go and fight and kill and murder," he said, "and so they seized the tooth of Buddah and destroyed it. By the way, it was not a tooth of Buddah at all, but a relic manufactured by the priests—it was a foot long. (Laughter) Every religion has its miracles ; you needn't laugh because the tooth was a foot long. Well, after the Spaniards took away the tooth they converted a few hundred and killed a few thousands ; and there Spain stops in the history of missionary efforts among the Buddhists."

The Portugese christians, he said, discovered the great temple at Bombay, built in the form of a body with three heads, in representation of the trinity as the Hindoo believes in a trinity.

"The Portugese saw it and couldn't explain it," said Kananda, with a sarcastic ring in his voice, "and so they concluded that it was of the devil, and gathered their forces and knocked off the three heads of the temple. The devil is such a handy man. I am sorry to see him so fast disappearing."

Then Kananda outlined the various stages of christian evangelization in India, and paid very high tribute to two

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or three missionaries, who, he said, had been great exceptions to the rule, and lived among the people to uplift and minister to their needs.

Antagonize Native Interests.

The Hindoo priest told how as soon as the land came into possession of the English people every village had its white colony, which huddled itself together and withdrew from all association with the natives. Then when the missionaries reached the country, he said, they would naturally go at once among the English people, who sympathized with them and with whom they could converse. The missionaries know nothing of the native language, he says, and so they cannot dwell with the people. Most of them are married and for the sake of getting their wives into the English society they identify themselves with all their interests, and in doing so directly antagonize the interests of the natives, and make it impossible to get in touch with them.

"We sometimes have famines in India," he said. "And so the young missionaries will hang about the fag end of a famine and give a starving native 5 shillings, and there you have him, a ready-made christian; take him. That was probably a baptist missionary, and so when a methodist missionary comes along he gives the same native 5 shillings, and his name is again registered as a convert. The only band of converts around each missionary is composed of those dependent upon him for a living. They have to be christians or starve. And they are dwindling as the money supply decreases. I am glad if you want to make christians in India by giving work and bread to the poor. God speed you to do that. There is one benefit that must be credited to the missionary movement. It makes education cheap. The missionaries bring some money with them from the people who send them, and the Indian government appropriates some, so that there are some very good colleges and schools available to the natives through missionaries. But I will be frank with you. There are no conversions from the schools to the christian religion. The Hindoo boy is very clever. He takes the bait, but never gets the hook."

The speaker said that the lady missionary goes into certain houses, gets four shillings a month, reads the Bible, while

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the native girls give indifferent attention, and teaches them to knit while they pay very keen attention. The girls, like the boys, he said are always alert to learn practical things, but they will give little heed to the christian religion, although they will espouse it if necessary to get the other advantages.

Most Missionaries Incompetent.

"The most of the men whom you send us as missionaries are incompetent," he said. "I have never known of a single man who has studied Sanscrit before going to India as a missionary and yet all our books and literature are printed in it."

He suggested as an explanation of the visits of the missionaries that "perhaps the atheism and scepticism at home is pushing the missionaries out all over the world." When in India he said he had thought the sole business of christianity [was] to send all people to the fires of hell, but since coming to America he has found that there are a great many liberal men. He referred to the parliament of religions, and told how a certain editor of a presbyterian paper had written an article at the close of the parliament entitled "The Lying Hindoo," in which he had scored him very severely.

In the article the editor said that "while in the parliament he was here as our guest, but now that it is over we ought to make an enthusiastic attack against him and his false doctrines."

In referring to the medical missionaries in India Kananda said: "India requires health, but it must be health for her people. And how can you help our people if you do not get in touch with them? When you come to us as missionaries you ought to throw over all idea of nationality. Jesus didn't go about among the English officials attending champagne suppers. He didn't care to have his wife get into high European society. If your missionary does not follow Christ what right has he to call himself a christian? We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let Him be preached in every village and corner of India. But don't have your missionaries choose their profession as a means of livelihood. Let them have the

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call of Christ. Let them feel within that they were born for that work.

"As far as converting India to christianity is concerned, there is no hope. If it were possible it ought not to be done. It would be dangerous; it would mark the destruction of all religions. If the whole universe should come to have the same temperament, physical or mental, destruction would immediately result. Why couldn't you convert the Jew? Why couldn't you make the Persians christians? Why is it that to every African who becomes a christian 100 become followers of Mohammed? Why can't you make an impression on India and China, and Japan? Because oneness of mental temperament all over the world would be death. Nature is too wise to allow such things.

Filled the World with Bloodshed.

"The christian nations have filled the world with bloodshed and tyranny. It is their day now. You kill and murder and bring drunkenness and disease in our country, and then add insult to injury by preaching Christ and Him crucified. What christian voice goes through the land protesting against such horrors? I have never heard any. You drink the idea in your mothers' milk that you are angels and we are devils. It is not enough that there be sunlight; you must have the eyes to see it. It is not only necessary that there be goodness in people; you must have the appreciation of goodness within yourselves in order to distinguish it. This is in every heart until it has been murdered by superstition and hideous blasphemy."

Then Kananda drew a very beautiful simile to illustrate that the essential truths of all religions are same, and all else is but incidental and unimportant environment. He told how the savage man might find a few jewels, and prizing them, tie them with a rude thong and string them about his neck. As he became slightly civilized he would perhaps exchange the thong for a string. Becoming still more enlightened he would fasten his jewels with a silken cord; and when possessed of a high civilization he would make an elaborate gold setting for his treasures. But throughout all the changes in settings the jewels—the essentials—would remain the same.

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"If the Hindoo wishes to criticize the christian religion he talks of the fables and miracles, and all the nonsense of the Bible, but he does not say one word in disparagement of the sermon on the mount, or of the beautiful life of Jesus. And so when the christian criticizes the Hindoo religion he talks about the dogmas and the temples, but he says nothing [should say nothing] against the morality and philosophy of the Hindoo. Help the Jew and let him help you. Help the Hindoo and let him help you. I deny that any human being has the faculty of seeing good at all who cannot see it in all places. There is the same beauty in the character of Christ and the character of Buddah. It is not an assimilation that we want, but adjustment and harmony. I ask the preachers to give up, first, the idea of nationality ; and second, the idea of sects. God's children have no sects.

"Much has been said about the ladies of India, and of their faults and condition. There are faults ; God help us to make them right. We are thankful for your criticism of our women. But while you are speaking of them I will say that I should be glad to see a dozen spiritual women in America. Nice dress, wealth, brilliant society, operas, novels—. Even intellectuality is not all that there is for a man or woman. There should be also spirituality, but that side is entirely absent from christian countries. They live in India."

Vive Kananda's large audience listened very respectfully to his remarks last night, and once or twice applauded heartily.

Even in Swamiji's estimation this lecture was one of his best. The following day he wrote to Mary Hale, "My last address was the best I ever delivered. Mr. Palmer was in ecstasies and the audience remained spellbound, so much so that it was after the lecture that I found I had spoken so long. A speaker always feels the uneasiness or inattention of the audience." There was certainly no inattention that Saturday night, and it might be said that his words became a part of the mental convictions of many who heard him. True, perhaps only a thousand or so heard him that night, but hundreds of people with firm convictions—provided that those convictions coincide with truth—can slowly change the thought of a nation. Moreover, Swamiji's words were spread through the medium of the press, not only in reports but in editorials. For instance, the *Evening News,* which was one of the

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most widely read papers in Detroit, printed an article on March 12 entitled, "A Pointer for the Missionaries." A large portion of this editorial was later reprinted by the *Boston Evening Transcript* of April 5, 1894, and thereby found its way into Volume IV of "The Complete Works," where it was included under the title, "Is India a Benighted Country?" But although most of the following article will be familiar, I believe it should be reproduced here in its entirety, for it is indicative of the reaction to Swamiji's repudiation of Christian missionary work in India:

A POINTER FOR THE MISSIONARIES.

Most people will be inclined to think that Swami Vive Kananda did better last night in his opera house lecture than he did in any of his former lectures in this city. The merit of the Brahman's utterances last night lay in their clearness. He drew a very sharp line of distinction between christianity and christianity, and told his audience plainly wherein he himself is a christian in one sense and not a christian in another sense. He also drew a sharp line between Hindooism and Hindooism, carrying the implication that he desired to be classed as a Brahman only in its better sense. Swami Vive Kananda stands superior to all criticism when he says:

"We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us, and let it permeate the very core of society. Let Him be preached in every village and corner of India."

When a man is as sound as that on the main question, all else that he may say must refer to the subordinate details. The best christian thought and hope of all the centuries have wholly to do with what Kananda says he wants to see in India —Christ's life "permeating every corner of society." Here is the highest "testimony," as our religionists are pleased to call it, of the essential truth and power of the real gospel of the Nazarene. The failure of christian missions in foreign lands is not to be referred to the divine person who stands behind the missionaries, for the pagans themselves are quite willing to concede the glory of that life, but to the missionary failure to illustrate that life in their methods and customs. There is infinite humiliation in this spectacle of a pagan priest read-

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ing lessons of conduct and of life to the men who have assumed the spiritual supervision of Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand, but the sense of humiliation is the sine qua non of most reforms of this world. Having said what he did of the glorious life of the author of the christian faith, Kananda has the right to lecture the way he has the men who profess to represent that life among the nations abroad.

"If your missionary does not represent Christ what right has he to call himself a christian? Let Christ be preached in every village of India, but don't have your missionaries choose their profession as a means of livelihood. Let them have the call of Christ. Let them feel from within that they were born for that work." And after all, how like the Nazarene that sounds! "Provide neither silver nor gold nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves ; for the workman is worthy of his meat." Those who had become at all familiar with the religious literature of India before the advent of Kananda are best prepared to understand the utter abhorrence of the orientals of our western commercial spirit—or what Kananda calls the shopkeeper's spirit—in all that we do, even in our very religion.

Here is a pointer for the missionaries which they cannot afford to ignore. They who would convert the eastern world of paganism must live up to what they preach in contempt for the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of them.

Swamiji's lecture at the Opera House not only impressed his friends but silenced his critics, at least for the time being. The following Sunday not one orthodox minister dared openly respond. An editorial in the *Sunday News Tribune,* which was controlled by the publisher of the *Evening News,* anticipated this silence in the following editorial that appeared on March 18:

THE LESSON OF TOLERATION.

"Every real thought on any real subject knocks the wind out of somebody or other," wrote Dr. Holmes many years ago, and when the sufferer gets his breath he begins the "back-talk" ; but it is not at all likely that the pulpits of Detroit will resound today with anything like the vigorous whacks

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which fell upon them after Kananda's first visit. The provocation, if such it can be called, which he gave a week ago in his lecture of two hours and a half, was greater than on the occasion of his former appearance, and this last address was professedly and openly in response to statements which had been made while the missionary convention was in session here, and it is reckoned the ablest of all his discourses in Detroit; nevertheless the chances are a good many to one that the clergymen hereabouts will not with one accord this time stand up and reply in any very vehement manner. It is more than probable that the placid Hindu has taught us a lesson and that the fruit of all his work here will be a broadening of our sympathies and some enlargement of our ability to comprehend views upon important subjects that are quite out of the beaten path in which our thoughts and opinions have been accustomed to travel.

From hearing what an intelligent Hindu like Kananda has to say of the religion of his country it is no more necessary to adopt that religion than it is to worship Zeus and Apollo as a result of studying the theology of the Greeks. Kananda is not a Buddhist, but if an educated priest of Buddhism should come along and be willing to tell us more than we knew before of the faith that has the largest following of any in the world, it would surely not be beneath the dignity of a scholar of the nineteenth century to listen patiently to what he had to say. The Mohammedans at one time led the world in learning and scientific attainments. If an Arabian disciple of Mohammed, fit to instruct in his religion, should crave audience of our people, it might be very safe and profitable to listen to him. The old Shinto religion of Japan has held the belief of myriads of men with intellects pretty nearly as acute as ours; would it be likely to damage our spiritual perceptions to hear a Shinto priest explain it?

We seem to be in some danger of taking a one-sided view of our own position and that of persons from whom we differ. There appears to be no question of politeness or propriety when we go to the people of Asia in their own land and beg to assure them that they have been following a vain shadow for several thousand years and that if they do not accept our new religion in place of their old religion they

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will find themselves booked for something decidedly uncomfortable in the next world; but we do not recognize the right of every person to preach his own religion quite so clearly when it is the man from Asia who comes to us.

There is no finer test of intellectual strength than the willingness to receive and consider the well-digested thoughts of all the people under the sun. The horizon of religious toleration stretches further and further away every year. Twelve months from now it is not at all likely that Kananda's coming to Detroit and talking to people who might choose to hear him would shake the churches from center to circumference or agitate the clergymen at all. It is not easy to see any sufficient reason why it should have done so at any time. While not many persons are greatly concerned about the Hindu's theology, there are members who feel thankful for the fresh encouragement that has been given to the spirit of toleration.

The writer of the above article was probably the same who, two weeks earlier, had raised his eyebrows at the pulpit-pounding that had followed Swamiji's first week in Detroit. He still did not seem to grasp the fact that the very nature of orthodox Christianity, which deemed itself to be the *one* saving religion and all else the work of the devil, prevented its preachers and followers from "tolerating" Swamiji. The color and mood of the silence following the Opera House lecture was perhaps well expressed by the following anonymous letter that appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* of March 17:

Mission Work in India.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

Kananda claimed in his lecture, Sunday evening, to be perfectly well posted in regard to mission work in India. How comes it then, that he is ignorant of the fact that all missionaries try to speak to the people among whom they work in their own vernacular?

Many missionaries do not learn the Sanskrit because it is a dead language, spoken nowhere, hence they spend their time on the spoken languages. It would please me to show you books in one vernacular, the work of American missionaries,

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notably a dictionary, by a man whose memory is revered, not only in Detroit, but, also, by many as learned Brahmans as Kananda himself.

This dictionary is the only one in the language it represents, and is constantly used by natives learning English, and by the English learning the native language.

May I ask Kananda why it is that the low caste people, in India, are so changed after coming in contact with the missionaries? Why are they better educated; why are they superior; why are they different from their own class who are still under the rule of the Brahman? It would also be a gratification to one who has lived years in India, and who knows a little about the country, and, also, about natural history, to learn what those creatures are that are seen by the hundreds (by all travelers), sunning themselves on the sand churs, in every large river in India, if they are not crocodiles? Can it be possible that the god Krishna, that wonderful incarnation of the pure and immaculate Vishnu, with his sixteen wives, and 16,000 concubines, and all the progeny he murdered, are disporting themselves under this guise, and is that the real reason why the creatures are bullet-proof?

Will Kananda tell us where he finds his definition of the word Swami? The Sanskrit dictionary, at the public library, says it means lord-master, owner-husband; but never a word about brother.

One thing more. Will the learned Babu tell us all he knows about the rites and ceremonies necessary for him to perform, before he can appear before his own people as a real Hindoo Brahman? It will gratify many, and prove instructive to hear from his own lips all about these ceremonies and their spiritual significance.

ONE OF THE MISSIONARIES.

No one answered this letter through the *Free Press* columns, but an article by our friend, O. P. Deldoc, who never hesitated to speak his mind, appeared in the *Detroit Critic* on March 18 and expressed, no doubt, the opinion of many. The following highly abridged version of Deldoc's lengthy polemic shows to what an extent Swamiji had aroused the liberal element of Detroit, and how dry the timber which he had set ablaze:

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CHIMERICAL RELIGION

A Brainy Writer Discusses One of the Great Questions of the Present Day

Was there No Love, No Joy, No Hope and No Religion Before Christ Came to Us?

Were All Noble Souls before His Time Doomed to Perdition?

It is nearly 1900 years since the religion of Christ was taught in all its primitive grandeur and purity. A religion of forbearance, meekness, charity and love, yet its fundamental principles of truth and righteousness were old and widely known and practiced before Christ was born. There were patriarchs, prophets, saints and martyrs; men who "walked with God"; law givers and high priests; good, wise and holy men, whose bones had crumbled to dust ages before the Star of Bethlehem arose. . . .

Was there no love, no hope, no joy, no religion then?. . .

Were all the noble souls abiding before Christ doomed to perdition?. . .

The question is not whether christianity is true, but are we true to Christianity as professed Christians?

I claim that the vast majority of so-called Christians are not true, but false to the precepts and practices of their Lord and Master. They are only chimerical christians, who roar with the lion's head, disguise their body in the form of a goat, and a scapegoat at that, and then wiggle the tail of a venomous dragon. They are continually belching forth flames of fire (hell fire) upon all who differ from their favorite dogmas, creeds and sects, vide Dr. Briggs, the "heretic," and Kananda, the "pagan." Some of their pet and petrified dogmas are comprised in this quarto of beautiful specimens, "The fall of man in Eden"; "The sin of unbelief"; "An atonement by proxy," and "The eternal punishment of the damned." If they encounter an individual with manhood, moral courage and wisdom . . ., they proceed at once to damn him.

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These mongrel specimens love to sing "This world is all a fleeting show," and so it is, a veritable Wonderland menagerie, filled with curious, incongruous monstrosities and deformities, such as Baptist barnacles, petrified Presbyterians, and Methodist mummies. . . .

Mind, I do not speak of those broad-hearted, liberal, thinking, reasoning, truthful christians, of whom thank God there are many. I am speaking of the vaster body of chimerical christians. "By their works ye shall know them." Intolerance, bigotry, superstition, envy, malice and falsehood are their prominent features. . . . They evade the truth, and are false even unto themselves. . . . They delight to prate of missionary work among the heathen, thanking God "they are not as other men are." The pagan, so-called, could teach them more of the fundamental truth of religion than they ever dreamed of in their philosophy. Better far to be like the heathen worshipping even a false god, than to be false to the God they pretend to worship. . . .

There is but one religion, one philosophy, one God over all. Religion is love; not love of self, but love of God and all His creatures. Religion: People preach for it, write for it, fight for it, die for it, do everything but live for it. . . .

A religious Hindoo comes to us and talks of love, asking for bread and they give him a stone. He tells them he gladly accepts their Christ with His religion which is old to them as the "rock of ages" upon the eternal hills, but they will accept neither his word, his philosophy or his religion. . . . They claim christianity has caused all advancement, all civilization. Whence came all the glory, all the grandeur and all the wisdom existing before the Nazarene Reformer was born among men and became one of the Sons of God?. . . It is as falsely ridiculous to claim such chimerical christianity has been the cause of civilization as it would be to say that it was due to plug hats and suspenders. . . .

All nations and all eras have had their reformers and their saviours, and there are more to follow, until even the despised Jew may yet have his long-looked-for Messiah. . . .

Since the advent of the Brahmin Monk, over-zealous and bigoted preachers have tried to defame him and denounce his pure philosophy. They have pointed out the ungodly

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condition of India; they have claimed her women were slaves, her law corrupt and vile. A sapient lawyer has quoted whole volumes of the laws of India with sneering sarcasm [see Chapter Six]; as well might he have quoted the ancient Mosiac Code, or the blue laws of Connecticut or pointed out our own laws with regard to licentiousness, women and prohibition. India never had drunkards until christian lands carried them liquor.

As well point out our barbarous treatment of the western Indian, our old slave laws or the records of vice and crime as found in the slums of our modern civilization. . . .

Truth is mighty and must prevail. This world or any other of God's unlimited universe does not stand upon a turtle, nor is it supported upon any Hercules. Its corner stones are light, liberty, love and law, and it is the chimerical christians who would knock away these four corner stones of the universe. . . .

Another intolerant bigot, occupying a Detroit pulpit, recently cast a slur on the world's parliament of religion, by warning his brethren to have no affiliation therewith. . . .

Let the Star of Bethlehem be the true Christian's polar star; let it arise and shine with all its ancient glory, as beheld by the wise men of the east; let its splendid light banish the mists of error and the darkness that befogs men's brains. Let it light up the dark and narrow aisles, not alone in pagan but in Christian lands, until the monster Chimera, the false deformity of Christianity, shall hide its hideous head forevermore.

Deldoc is to be thanked for his articulate dissertations, for rarely do we find so explicit a description of the religious bigotry existing in the United States some sixty years ago. It was, moreover, a description which would tend to make Christian ministers less inclined to cast stones across the sea.

II

During the first week of Swamiji's second visit to Detroit he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Palmer. Mr. Palmer was one

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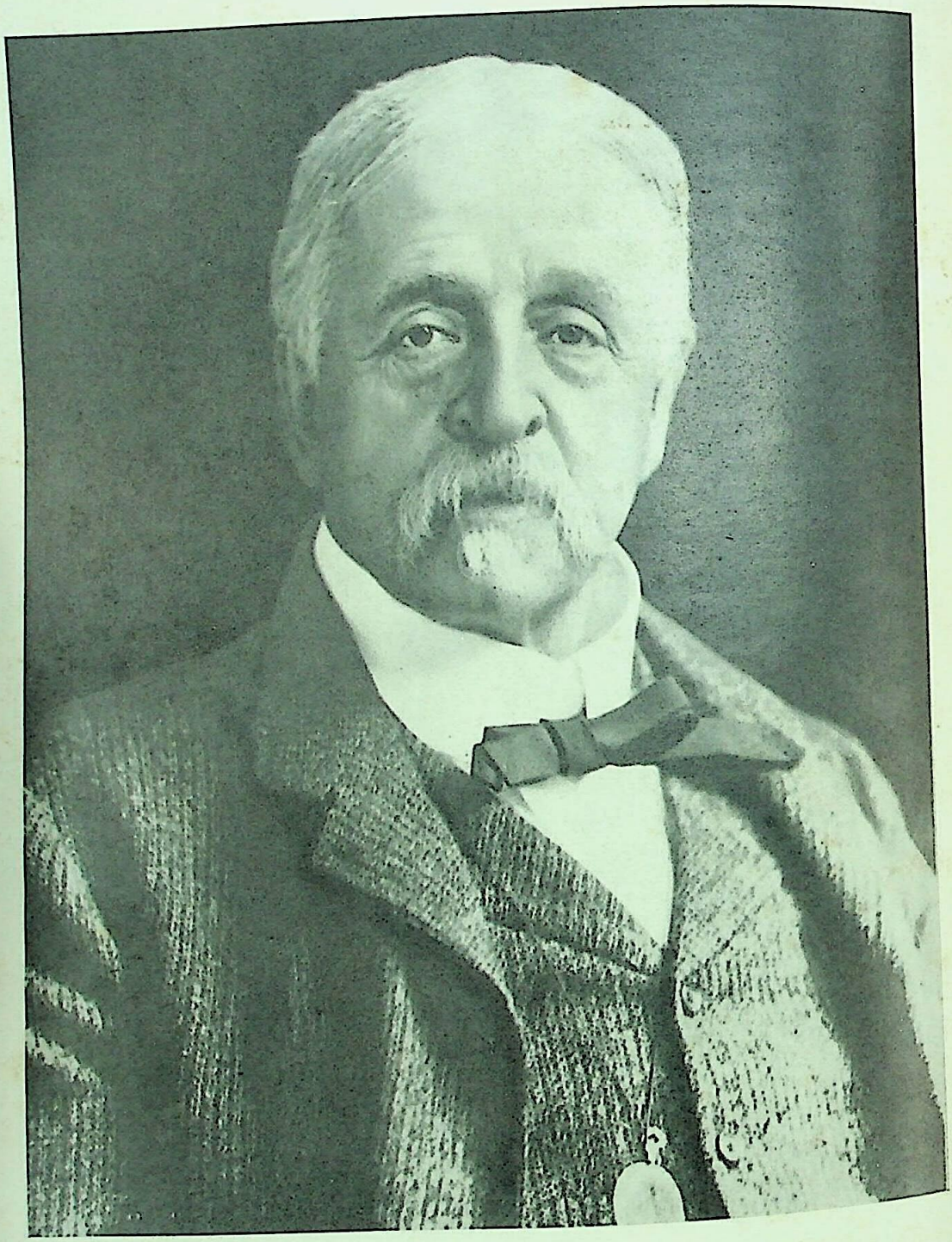

THE HON. THOMAS W. PALMER

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of Detroit's wealthy businessmen who felt it their responsibility to enter politics. "In those days," it is said in a history of Detroit, "a financially successful man was supposed to put his talents to the public service; a duty to keep public affairs straight was part of the price of success." Palmer put his talents to the service not only of Detroit but of the federal government. After holding various local offices, he was elected to the United States Senate in 1883, and at the end of his term was appointed Minister to Spain. Shortly after Palmer had resigned this post he was chosen president of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, and it was, no doubt, at the Parliament of Religions that he first came to know and to love Swamiji.

Of his Detroit host Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale on March 12: "I am now living with Mr. Palmer. He is a very nice gentleman. He gave a dinner the night before last to a group of his old friends, each more than 60 years of age, which he calls his 'old boys' club.'" And again, on March 15, he writes: "I am pulling on well with old Palmer. He is a very jolly, good old man. . . . The funniest thing said about me here was in one of the papers which said, 'The cyclonic Hindu has come and is a guest with Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer has become a Hindu and is going to India; only he insists that two reforms should be carried out: firstly that the Car of Jaggernath should be drawn by Percherons raised in Mr. Palmer's Loghouse Farm, and secondly that the Jersey cow be admitted into the pantheon of Hindu sacred cows.' Mr. Palmer is passionately fond of both Percheron horse and Jersey cow and has a great stock of both in his Loghouse Farm. . . . [He] makes me laugh the whole day. Tomorrow there is going to be another dinner party."

Mr. Palmer's "Old Boys' Club" consisted of some of the most influential citizens of Detroit, one of whom was host on the evening of March 15 at one of the many dinners given for Swamiji. The following items which tell of this event appeared in the *Detroit Journal* of March 16, and the *Free Press* of March 17, respectively:

DINNER TO KANANDA

Pleasant Function of E. W. Cottrell Last Evening.

Eber W. Cottrell gave a very elaborate dinner last evening at his residence, 155 Lafayette-ave., Vive Kananda

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being the guest of honor. The other guests who shared the delightful affair were Ex-Senator T. W. Palmer, M. S. Smith, W. Livingstone, jr., F. E. Driggs, Capt. Gardener, of Fort Wayne, Michael Brennan, G. W. Cottrell and George C. Robinson.

KANANDA LECTURES AGAIN MONDAY.

Eber W. Cottrell entertained Kananda at his residence, 155 Lafayette avenue, last night. A charming dinner was given and the distinguished Hindoo was the center of attraction. Among others who were present were Hon. T. W. Palmer, M. S. Smith, W. Livingstone, Jr., F. E. Driggs, Michael Brennan, George Robinson and Capt. Gardener, of Fort Wayne. Kananda is extremely happy in this kind of a gathering. He is quick to reply to all questions, and his conversation is interesting and instructive. One of the guests commenting upon the event remarked that the eastern brother displayed a subtlety which is a characteristic of the educated Hindoos. On Monday night Kananda will lecture at the Auditorium, taking for his subject "Brahmanism." [His subject was "Buddhism."]

Almost every name mentioned in the above reports is also mentioned in histories of Detroit. These were men who ardently and dutifully engaged in politics and who championed numerous measures intended to promote the public welfare. They were, in a sense, merchant-princes in an age in which politics had a place for merchants and princes. They were good and solid men, and Swamiji talking to them at their elaborate, many-coursed dinners was as much at home as he was at Mrs. Bagley's feminine "afternoons."

Swamiji stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Palmer for a festive and strenuous week, toward the end of which Mrs. Bagley, understandably, began to become restive. A letter from Swamiji to Isabelle McKindley was given in Chapter Five, in which he says: "I have returned today to Mrs. Bagley's as she was sorry that I would remain so long with Mr. Palmer. Of course in Palmer's house there was real 'good time.' He is a real jovial heartwhole fellow, and likes 'good time' a little too much and his 'hot Scotch.' But he is right along

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innocent and childlike in his simplicity." (Although Mr. Palmer liked his "hot Scotch," it should perhaps be mentioned that in later years he became an ardent advocate of Prohibition.)

It was probably while Swamiji was staying with Mr. Palmer that he broke his contract with the lecture bureau—a three-year contract which within four months had become a kind of bondage to him. Perhaps it was some of Swamiji's businessmen acquaintances who were instrumental in freeing him, for according to Sister Christine, had it not been for the intervention of influential friends, there would have been no way out. Breaking the contract, however, involved a financial loss. It has been learned from a reliable source that it was a loss of almost all the money Swamiji had so far saved for India!

It is difficult to estimate exactly how much he had earned and saved during his tour, for his references to money—a subject distasteful to him—are few and far between. It is fairly certain, however, that although he had lectured almost incessantly since his arrival in America, he could not have accumulated a great deal by March, 1894. Not only had the management of the bureau exploited him as though he were some sort of curiosity at whom people in small towns would pay to stare, but it had cheated him at every turn, taking from the box-office receipts a much greater percentage than was customary. In addition, while trying to earn money for India Swamiji had many expenses of traveling, staying in hotels, buying suitable clothing and so on.

As for financial contributions to his cause, we know only that Mr. Freer donated two hundred dollars. Whether or not Mr. Palmer and the other "merchant-princes" of Swamiji's acquaintance also contributed we have no way of knowing. We do know, however, a little in regard to his earnings. For instance, immediately following the Parliament he writes that he received "from 30 to 80 dollars a lecture" (Chapter One). His next mention of his earnings comes on March 19, 1894, when he wrote, "A lecture fetches [in America] from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred [about 166 dollars]." Again, on July 11, he wrote, "I earned in one [Detroit lecture] $2,500, i.e., Rs. 7,500, in one hour, but got only 200 dollars! I was cheated by a roguish lecture bureau." Perhaps, taking the tour as a whole, Swamiji averaged at the most about 75 dollars a lecture. This was an extremely small sum ; but in trying to compute his earnings, one must take into consideration the fact that although prices in general were considered exorbitant, the value of the dollar in America was higher in those days

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than it is today. As Swamiji himself pointed out, a decent pair of men's shoes cost $8 and a servant received $2 a day. According to an advertisement in an 1894 Detroit newspaper, one could buy, on sale, a man's winter suit for $6·75 and a hundred-piece English porcelain dinner set for $7·50. At this rate, 75 dollars was perhaps no trifling amount even in America, whereas in India it was a small fortune. Nonetheless, compared to the amount of energy that Swamiji expended, his Midwestern tour was, to say the least, not lucrative. Moreover, the criticism he was receiving from missionary circles as well as from some of his own countrymen was doing his work considerable harm. On June 20 he wrote to India: "Now lecturing for a year in this country, I could not succeed at all (of course, I have no wants for myself) in my plan of raising some funds for setting up my work. First, this year is a very bad year in America; thousands of their poor are without work. Secondly, the missionaries and the Brahmo Samaj try to thwart all my views. Thirdly, a year has rolled by, and our country could not even do so much for me as to say to the American people that I was a real Sannyasin and no cheat, and that I represent the Hindu religion."

For almost a year Swamiji labored without the slightest support from his countrymen, and while he earned enough through lecturing to pay his own expenses, there could not have been much left over. For the benefit of those who judged his financial success by the popularity of his lectures and who, for one reason or another, begrudged him any gain, the following item in the *Detroit Critic*, March 25, pointed out how little he was actually making:

> I hear a great deal about the money Kananda is making by his rather sensational campaign in the efforts to propagate the great truths and beauties and spiritual blessings of heathenism in Detroit. The financial gain to Kananda, I happen to know, is almost as meager as the salaries of Christian missionaries sent to India at the instance of the Foreign Missions departments of our various denominations. The fact is that he is making barely anything. He has been here now some six weeks, and during that time has given a public lecture at the Detroit Opera House, one at the Auditorium, one in a church and one or two in the state. At the first the opera house got about all the money in sight; at the Auditorium, unless Mrs. Bagley made him the present of the use of the building—which seems possible as he has been her guest—he

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did well if he cleared expenses; at the church I don't know how he came out, probably better than anywhere else. The afternoon talks at private houses which gave him his reputation are as free as air. So Kananda, as I figure it, has done little more the past six weeks than play even and besides, the territory is now worked out. The fact remains, however, that with rapid traveling and large territory he would be a paying attraction.

III

The afternoon talks which are mentioned above as having given Swamiji his reputation and as having been as free as air, electrified Detroit as much as did his public lectures. During these talks in private homes Swamiji spoke on many subjects which did not fall within his lectures, answering innumerable questions that must have ranged all the way from the conditions of village life in India to the subtleties of Hinduism and, in so doing, refreshing the minds of his listeners with the newness and brilliance of his ideas. Even his most casual comments and observations were quoted far and wide. One of these was published by the *Evening News* of March 21, as follows:

WAYSIDE STORIES

> Curiosity, says our Hindoo visitor, is the most conspicuous trait of the American people; but he added that it is the way to knowledge. This has long been the European estimate of the American, or more strictly the Yankee character, and perhaps the Hindoo's comment was only an echo of what he had heard the Englishmen in India say of the "Yankee."

The *News*, of course, was consistently adverse to giving Swamiji any credit for originality. It is noteworthy, however, that the phrase, "our Hindoo visitor," needed no further explanation, so famous had he become in Detroit.

Fortunately Swamiji's afternoon talks are not entirely lost to us. The following article, which appeared in the *Detroit Tribune* of March 17, was evidently written from notes taken on Friday afternoon, March 16:

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KNEW NOT KIPLING.

Kananda Never Heard of Him till He Came Here.

Hardly Agrees with Some of the Stories Rudyard Has Told.

The Monk Explains that It is Not Proper to Talk of the Profession of Lalun in India—The Oriental Custom a Terrible Thing, Kananda Admits.

"Lalun is a member of the most ancient profession in the world. Lilith was her very great-grandmamma, and that was before the days of Eve, as everyone knows. In the west people say rude things about Lalun's profession and write lectures about it, and distribute the lectures to young persons in order that morality may be preserved. In the east, where the profession is hereditary, descending from mother to daughter, nobody writes lectures or takes any notice."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

The story of which the sentences that precede this one are a paragraph, was written in India. They were written by Rudyard Kipling, from whom most of us have learned all that we definitely know about India, with the exception of the fact that India raises wheat enough to be a great competitor of our own farmers, that men work there for two cents a day and that women throw their babies into the Ganges, which is the sacred river of the country.

But Vive Kananda, since he came to this country, has exploded the story about the women of India feeding their babies to the alligators, and now he says that he never heard of Rudyard Kipling until he came to America and that it is not proper in India to talk of such a profession as that of Lalun, out of which Mr. Kipling has made one of his most delightful and instructive tales.

"In India," said Kananda yesterday, "we do not discuss such things. No one ever speaks of those unfortunate women. When a woman is discovered to be unchaste in India she is

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hurled out from her caste. No one thereafter can touch or speak to her. If she went into the house they would take up and clean the carpets and wash the walls she breathed against. No one can have anything to do with such a person. There are no women who are not virtuous in Indian society. It is not at all as it is in this country. Here there are bad women living side by side with virtuous women in your society. One can not know who is bad and who is good in America. But in India once a woman slips she is an outcast forever, she and her children, sons and daughters. It is terrible, I admit, but it keeps society pure."

"How about the men?" was asked. "Does the same rule hold in regard to them? Are they outcast when they are proven to be unchaste?"

"Oh, no. It is quite different with them. It would be so, perhaps, if they could be found out. But the men move about. They can go from place to place. It is not possible to discover them. The women are shut up in the house. They are certainly discovered if they do anything wrong. And when they are discovered they are thrown out. Nothing can save them. Sometimes it is very hard when a father has to give up his daughter or a husband his wife. But if they do not give them up they will be banished with them, too. It is very different in this country. Women cannot go about there and make associations as they do here. It is very terrible, but it makes society pure.

Our Great Sin.

"I think that unchastity is the one great sin of your country. It must be so, there is so much luxury here. A poor girl would sell herself for a new bonnet. It must be so where there is so much luxury."

Mr. Kipling says this about Lalun and her profession: "Lalun's real husband, for even ladies of Lalun's profession have husbands in the east, was a great, big jujube tree. Her mama, who had married a fig, spent ten thousand rupees on Lalun's wedding, which was blessed by forty-seven clergymen of mama's church, and distributed 5,000 rupees in charity to the poor. And that was a custom of the land."

In India when a woman is unfaithful to her husband she

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loses her caste, but none of her civil or religious rights. She can still own property and the temples are still open to her.

"Yes," said Kananda, "a bad woman is not allowed to marry. She can not marry any one without their being an outcast like herself, so she marries a tree, or sometimes a sword. It is the custom. Sometimes these women grow very rich and become very charitable, but they can never regain their caste. In the interior towns, where they still adhere to the old customs she cannot ride in a carriage, no matter how wealthy she may be ; the best that she is allowed is a pair of bullocks. And then in India she has to wear a dress of her own, so that she can be distinguished. You can see these people going by, but no one ever speaks to them. The greatest number of these women is in the cities. A good many of them are Jews, too, but they all have different quarters of the cities, you know. They all live apart. It is a singular thing that, bad as they are, wretched as some of these women are, they will not admit a christian lover. They will not eat with them or touch them—the 'omnivorous barbarians,' as they call them. They call them that because they eat everything. Do you know what that disease, the unspeakable disease, is called in India? It is called 'Bad Faringan,' which means 'the christian disease.' It was the christians that brought it into India."

"Has there been any attempt in India to solve this question? Is it a public question the way it is in America?"

"No, there has been very little done in India. There is a great field for women missionaries if they would convert prostitutes of India. They do nothing in India—very little. There is one sect, the Veshnava [Vaishnava], who try to reclaim these women. This is a religious sect. I think about 90 per cent of all prostitutes belong to this sect. This sect does not believe in caste and they go everywhere without reference to caste. There are certain temples, as the temple of Jagatnot [Jagannath], where there is no caste. Everybody who goes into that town takes off his caste while he is there because that is holy ground and everything is supposed to be pure there. When he goes outside he resumes it again, for caste is a mere worldly thing. You know some of the castes are so particular that they will not eat any food unless it is

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prepared by themselves. They will not touch any one outside of their caste. But in this city they all live together. This is the only sect in India that makes proselytes. It makes everybody a member of its church. It goes into the Himalayas and converts the wild men. You perhaps did not know that there were wild men in India. Yes, there are. They dwell at the foot of the Himalayas."

"Is there any ceremony by which a woman is declared unchaste, a civil process?" Kananda was asked.

"No, it is not a civil process. It is just custom. Sometimes there is a formal ceremony and sometimes there is not. They simply make pariahs of them. When any woman is suspected sometimes they get together and give her a sort of trial, and if it is decided that she is guilty then a note is sent around to all the other members of the caste and she is banished.

"Mind you," he exclaimed, "I do not mean to say that this is a solution of the question. The custom is terribly rigid. But you have no solution of the question, either. It is a terrible thing. It is a great wrong of the western world."

On March 13, the *Evening News* printed the following little item:

CHANCE FOR KANANDA

Another Christian Pastor Touches up His Religion.

A leading catholic clergyman of Detroit, who gives the origin of Buddhism as it is found in the encyclopedias, says the 10 commandments of Buddha were taken from Hebrewism, which spread into India in the reign of Alexander the Great. These 10 commandments are the same as those which Moses found up in the mountain. Here's a chance for Kananda.

Whether Swamiji was aware of this "chance" or not, he gave a very clear answer to the leading Catholic clergyman of Detroit in the lecture which he gave at the Auditorium on Monday, March 19. The following article is a report of that lecture which appeared in

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both the *Detroit Journal* and the *Detroit Tribune* of March 20. Unfortunately, for it is all we have of this lecture on Buddhism, it is short. The following is from the *Tribune*:

AS THE WAVE FOLLOWS WAVE

So Soul Follows Soul, according to Kananda.

Vive Kananda lectured to an audience of about 150 [according to the *Journal,* 500] at the Auditorium last night upon "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia." Honorable Don M. Dickinson introduced him to the audience.

"Who shall say that this system of religion is divine and that doomed?" asked Mr. Dickinson in his introductory remarks. "Who shall draw the mystic line?"

He also said that at one time the followers of Buddha were the unwilling allies of the christian religion. Kananda appeared in a robe of orange yellow with a sash-like cord about the waist, and a turban draped out of some eastern cloth of silken texture, the flowing end of which was brought in front over one shoulder.

Vive Kananda reviewed at length the early religions of India. He told of the great slaughter of animals on the altar of sacrifice; of Buddha's birth and life; of his puzzling questions to himself over the causes of creation and the reasons for existence; of the earnest struggle of Buddha to find the solution of creation and life; of the final result.

Buddha, he said, stood head and shoulders above all other men. He was one, he said, [of] whom his friends or enemies could never say that he drew a breath or ate a crumb of bread but for the good of all.

"He never preached transmigration of the soul," said Kananda, "except he believed one soul was to its successor like the wave of the ocean that grew and died away, leaving naught to the succeeding wave but its force. He never preached that there was a God, nor did he deny there was a God.

" 'Why should we be good?' his disciples asked of him.

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" 'Because,' he said, 'you inherited good. Let you in your turn leave some heritage of good to your successors. Let us all help the onward march of accumulated goodness, for goodness' sake.'

"He was the first prophet. He never abused any one or arrogated anything to himself. He believed in our working out our own salvation in religion.

" 'I can't tell you,' he said, on his death bed, 'nor any one. Depend not on any one. Work out your own religion [salvation].'

"He protested against the inequality of man and man, or of man and beast. All life was equal, he preached. He was the first man to uphold the doctrine of prohibition in liquors. 'Be good and do good,' he said. 'If there is a God you have him by being good. If there is no God, being good is good. He is to be blamed for all he suffers. He is to be praised for all his good.'

"He was the first who brought the missionaries into existence. He came as a savior to the down-trodden millions of India. They could not understand his philosophy, but they saw the man and his teachings and they followed him."

In conclusion Kananda said that Buddhism was the foundation of the christian religion; that the catholic church came from Buddhism.

This lecture on Buddhism had been advertised as Swamiji's "farewell lecture," which he no doubt intended it to be, for on March 20 he had an engagement at Bay City, and on March 22 one at Saginaw, relatively small cities in Michigan not far from Detroit. But before he left Detroit Swamiji evidently had to promise his friends to come back as soon as he had filled his out-of-town engagements (which will be dealt with in a later chapter). In the *Sunday News Tribune* of March 18 we read the following item:

> Swami Vive Kananda has been prevailed upon to deliver a lecture on "The Women of India" next Saturday evening in the Unitarian Church. This is a subject he has not exploited in Detroit, and his immediate friends here expect to be highly entertained and instructed.

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The condition of women in India, as has already been seen, was one of the topics of discussion at Swamiji's afternoon talks. So inspiring and so ennobling must have been his description of the Hindu ideals of womanhood, and so contrary must they have been to missionary propaganda that it is little wonder that Swamiji was asked to make his talks on the subject available to the public. This he did, but unfortunately his lecture on "The Women of India" was reported upon only briefly by the *Free Press* and the *Evening News* of March 25 respectively, as follows (the item in the *Journal* was a repetition of that in the *Free Press*.):

WOMEN OF INDIA

In the West Woman is a Wife; in the East a Mother.

Kananda lectured last night at the Unitarian church on "The Women of India." The speaker reverted to the women of ancient India, showing in what high regard they are held in the holy books, where women were prophetesses. Their spirituality then was admirable. It is unfair to judge women in the east by the western standard. In the west woman is the wife; in the east she is the mother. The Hindoos worship the idea of mother, and even the monks are required to touch the earth with their foreheads before their mothers. Chastity is much esteemed.

The lecture was one of the most interesting Kananda has delivered, and he was warmly received.

INDIAN WOMEN.

Vive Kananda Lectured upon Them Last Night.

Swami Vive Kananda lectured at the Unitarian Church last night on "The Women of India, Past, Medieval and the Present." He stated that in India the woman was the visible manifestation of God and that her whole life was given up to the thought that she was a mother, and to be a perfect mother she must be chaste. No mother in India ever abandoned her offspring, he said, and defied any one to

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prove the contrary. The girls of India would die if they, like American girls, were obliged to expose half their bodies to the vulgar gaze of young men. He desired that India be judged from the standard of that country and not from this.

Evidently Swamiji did not say enough in this lecture to satisfy those who had heard his afternoon talks on the same subject. Fortunately, however, someone had the good judgment to take notes at one of those informal gatherings, and thus at least some of the things that Swamiji had said and did not repeat in the lecture were preserved for the Detroit public (and for us) in the following article which appeared in the *Tribune* of April 1, 1894:

"WOMEN OF INDIA."

Things Kananda Forgot to Say Publicly.

Scraps of Conversation Reported by One of His Listeners.

When He Sees a Hindu Girl Kananda "Marvels That God could Make Anything so Exquisite"—Christian Witch vs. Hindu Widow Burning—Things to Read.

While Swami Kananda was in Detroit he had a number of conversations, in which he answered questions regarding the women of India. It was the information he thus imparted that suggested a public lecture from him on this subject. But as he speaks without notes, some of the points he made in private conversation did not appear in his public address. Then his friends were in a measure disappointed. But one of his lady listeners has put on paper some of the things he told in his afternoon talks, and it is now for the first time given to the press:

To the great tablelands of the high Himalaya mountains first came the Aryans, and there to this day abides the pure type of Brahman, a people which we westerners can but dream of. Pure in thought, deed and action, so honest that a bag of gold left in a public place would be found unharmed twenty years after; so beautiful that, to use Kananda's own phrase, "to see a girl in the fields is to pause and marvel that

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God could make anything so exquisite." Their features are regular, their eyes and hair dark, and their skin the color which would be produced by the drops which fell from a pricked finger into a glass of milk. These are the Hindus in their pure type, untainted and untrammeled.

As to their property laws, the wife's dowry belongs to her exclusively, never becoming the property of the husband. She can sell or give away without his consent. The gifts from any one to herself, including those of the husband, are hers alone, to do with as she pleases.

Woman walks abroad without fear; she is as free as perfect trust in those about her can render her. There is no zenana in the Himalayas, and there is a part of India which the missionaries never reach. These villages are most difficult of access. These people, untouched by Mahometan influence, can but be reached by wearisome and toilsome climbing, and are unknown to Mahometan and Christian alike.

India's First Inhabitants.

In the forest of India are found races of wild people—very wild, even to cannibalism. These are the original Indians and never were Aryan or Hindu.

As the Hindus settled in the country proper and spread over its vast area, corruptions of many kinds found home among them. The sun was scorching and the men exposed to it were dark in color.

Five generations are but needed to change the transparent glow of the white complexion of the dwellers of the Himalaya Mountains to the bronzed hue of the Hindu of India.

Kananda has one brother very fair and one darker than himself. His father and mother are fair. The women are apt to be, the cruel etiquette of the Zenana established for protection from the Mohammedans keeping them within doors, fairer. Kananda is thirty-one years old.

A Clip at American Men.

Kananda asserts with an amused twinkle in his eye that American men amuse him. They profess to worship woman,

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but in his opinion they simply worship youth and beauty. They never fall in love with wrinkles and gray hair. In fact he is under a strong impression that American men once had a trick—inherited, to be sure—of burning up their old women. Modern history calls this the burning of witches. It was men who accused and condemned witches, and it was usually the old age of the victim that led her to the stake. So it is seen that burning women alive is not exclusively a Hindu custom. He thought that if it were remembered that the christian church burned old women at the stake, there would be less horror expressed regarding the burning of Hindu widows.

Burnings Compared.

The Hindu widow went to her death agony amid feasting and song, arrayed in her costliest garments and believing for the most part that such an act meant the glories of Paradise for herself and family. She was worshiped as a martyr and her name was enshrined among the family records.

However horrible the rite appears to us, it is a bright picture compared to the burning of the christian witch who, considered a guilty thing from the first, was thrown in a stifling dungeon, tortured cruelly to extort confession, subjected to an infamous trial, dragged amid jeering to the stake and consoled amid her sufferings by the bystander's comfort that the burning of her body was but the symbol for hell's everlasting fires, in which her soul would suffer even greater torment.

Mothers are Sacred.

Kananda says the Hindu is taught to worship the principle of motherhood. The mother outranks the wife. The mother is holy. The motherhood of God is more in his mind than the fatherhood.

All women, whatever the caste, are exempt from corporal punishment. Should a woman murder, her head is spared. She may be placed astride a donkey facing his tail. Thus riding through the streets a drummer shouts her crime, after which she is free, her humiliation being deemed

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sufficient punishment to serve as a preventive for further crime.

Should she care to repent, there are religious houses open to her, where she can become purified or she can at her own option at once enter the class of monks and so become a holy woman.

The question was put to Mr. Kananda whether the freedom thus allowed in the joining the monks without a superior over them did not tend to hypocrisy among the order, as he claims, of the purest of Hindu philosophers. Kananda assented, but explained that there is no one between the people and the monk. The monk has broken down all caste. A Brahmin will not touch the low-caste Hindu, but let him or her become a monk and the mightiest will prostrate himself before the low-caste monk.

The people are obliged to take care of the monk, but only as long as they believe in his sincerity. Once condemned for hypocrisy he is called a liar and falls to the depths of mendicancy—a mere wandering beggar—inspiring no respect.

Other Thoughts.

A woman has the right of way with even a prince. When the studious Greeks visited Hindustan to learn of the Hindu, all doors were open to them, but when the Mohammedan with his sword and the Englishman with his bullets came their doors were closed. Such guests were not welcomed. As Kananda deliciously words it: "When the tiger comes we close our doors until he has passed by."

The United States, says Kananda, has inspired him with hopes for great possibilities in the future, but our destiny, as that of the world, rests not in the lawmakers of today, but in the women. Mr. Kananda's words: "The salvation of your country depends upon its women."

The lecture, "The Women of India," was Swamiji's last in "the dynamic city." He left shortly afterward, not to return until the early part of 1896 when, on invitation, he held classes and lectures in Detroit for a period of about two weeks. Of this later visit Mary Funke writes:

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He was accompanied by his stenographer, the faithful Goodwin. They occupied a suite of rooms at The Richelieu, a small family hotel, and had the use of the large drawing-room for class work and lectures. The room was not large enough to accommodate the crowds and to our great regret many were turned away. The room, as also the hall, staircase and library were literally packed. At that time he was all Bhakti—the love for God was a hunger and a thirst with him. A kind of divine madness seemed to take possession of him, as if his heart would burst with longing for the Beloved Mother.

His last public appearance in Detroit was at the Temple Beth El of which the Rabbi Louis Grossman, an ardent admirer of the Swami, was the pastor. It was Sunday evening and so great was the crowd that we almost feared a panic. There was a solid line reaching far out into the street and hundreds were turned away. Vivekananda held the large audience spell-bound, his subject being . . . "The Ideal of a Universal Religion." He gave us a most brilliant and masterly discourse. Never had I seen the Master look as he looked that night. There was something in his Beauty not of earth. . . .

Inasmuch as Swamiji was so much loved and respected by the Bagley family, it would seem strange that he did not stay at their home during this 1896 visit. On making inquiries, however, I have learned that in 1896 Mrs. Bagley was making a prolonged stay in Colorado where one of her daughters was recovering from tuberculosis. (Two years later, still in Colorado, Mrs. Bagley died from a sudden attack of appendicitis.) Had she been in Detroit in 1896 Swamiji would surely have again been her guest—together with the faithful Goodwin—and have filled her large drawing rooms with crowds of people; for despite the fact that a whispering campaign had been waged against him during his absence, his fame and popularity had grown rather than decreased.

IV

As has been pointed out earlier, there was scarcely any opposition in Detroit to Swamiji's highly provocative lecture, "Christian Missions

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in India," which he had delivered in reply to previous and uninhibited criticism from the orthodox clergy and the missionaries. Why this sudden silence? It certainly did not mean that Swamiji's opponents had been overcome by a sense of universal brotherhood and toleration. One factor, however, that should never be ignored in trying to explain various reactions to Swamiji's lectures is the tremendous—one might almost say supernatural—power he was able to exert when he so wished, and in this particular instance it would indeed seem that some power had drained away the strength of his opponents. But however that may be, the strange new silence marked a turning point in the attitude of orthodox Christianity toward India. From this time forward few missionaries or clergymen stood up in America and openly made absurd statements in regard to Hinduism such as had for generations poisoned the Western mind.

This is not to say that all open opposition to Swamiji was suddenly dispensed with. On the contrary, Christian missionaries still indulged in a great deal of propaganda, although the center of their operations was henceforth India rather than America. As far as America was concerned, the opposition went underground where, joining already existing forces, it commenced a whispering campaign in an effort to besmirch Swamiji's character. It is shocking to contemplate, but Swamiji's enemies, whoever they may have been, not only spread malicious scandal about him in a desperate attempt to discredit him in the eyes of his supporters and followers, but plotted to do away with him altogether.

The following story comes to us from the recorded and published conversations of Swami Vijnanananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who heard it from Swamiji himself. It was at a dinner in Detroit that Swamiji, about to drink his coffee, saw by his side the vision of Sri Ramakrishna warning him, "Do not drink—it is poisoned." Such a story would perhaps not pass as evidence in the law courts, but when told by Swamiji and retold by Swami Vijnanananda, a great monk, a great knower of God and a great scholar, we cannot doubt its veracity, nor can we fail to accept it as an indication of the virulent enmity of some individuals towards Swamiji.

"But the Guru is with me," he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda from Detroit on March 19, "what could anyone do?"

Swamiji's friends were also unshakably with him. We know from "The Life" how Mrs. Bagley and her daughter, Helen Bagley, wrote letters repudiating the scandal his enemies had spread in Detroit and

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elsewhere through anonymous letters and whispering campaigns. The Bagley letters are so eloquent and throw so much light on Swamiji's stay in Detroit, that I believe they can be quoted here without fear of burdening the reader.

Writing to a friend from Annisquam, Massachusetts, on June 22, 1894, Mrs. Bagley says:

> You write of my dear friend, Vivekananda. I am glad of an opportunity to express my admiration of his character and it makes me most indignant that anyone should call him in question. He has given us in America higher ideas of life than we have ever had before. In Detroit, an old conservative city, in all the Clubs he is honoured as no one has ever been, and I only feel that all who say one word against him are jealous of his greatness and his fine spiritual perceptions; and yet how can they be? He does nothing to make them so.
>
> He has been a revelation to Christians, . . . he has made possible for all of us a diviner and more noble practical life. As a religious teacher and an example to all I do not know his equal. It is so wrong and so untrue to say that he is intemperate. All who have been brought in contact with him day by day, speak enthusiastically of his sterling qualities of character, and men in Detroit who judge most critically, and who are unsparing, admire and respect him. . . . He has been a guest in my house more than three weeks, and my sons as well as my son-in-law and my entire family found Swami Vivekananda a gentleman always, most courteous and polite, a charming companion and an ever-welcome guest. I have invited him to visit us at my summer-home here at Annisquam, and in my family he will always be honoured and welcomed. I am really sorry for those who say aught against him, more than I am angry, for they know so little what they are talking about. He has been with Mr. and Mrs. Hale of Chicago much of the time while in that city. I think that has been his home. They invited him first as guest and later were unwilling to part with him. They are Presbyterians; . . . cultivated and refined people, and they admire, respect and love Vivekananda. He is a strong, noble human being, one who walks with God. He is simple and trustful as a child. In Detroit I gave him an evening

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reception, inviting ladies and gentlemen, and two weeks afterwards he lectured to invited guests in my parlour. . . . I had included lawyers, judges, ministers, army-officers, physicians and businessmen with their wives and daughters. Vivekananda talked two hours on 'The Ancient Hindu Philosophers and What They Taught.' All listened with intense interest to the end. Wherever he spoke people listened gladly and said, 'I never heard man speak like that.' He does not antagonize, but lifts people up to a higher level—they see something beyond man-made creeds and denominational names, and they feel one with him in their religious beliefs.

Every human being would be made better by knowing him and living in the same house with him. . . . I want every one in America to know Vivekananda, and if India has more such let her send them to us.

And in another letter, dated March 20, 1895, Mrs. Bagley writes to the same friend, who was evidently hearing a great deal of gossip and who was inclined to listen:

Let my first word be that all this about Swami Vivekananda is absolute falsehood from beginning to end. Nothing could be more false. We all enjoyed every day of the six weeks he spent with us. . . . He was invited by the different clubs of gentlemen in Detroit, and dinners were given him in beautiful homes so that greater numbers might meet him and talk with him and hear him talk, . . . and everywhere and at all times he was, as he deserved to be, honoured and respected. No one knew him without respecting his integrity and excellence of character and his strong religious nature. At Annisquam last summer I had a cottage and we wrote Vivekananda, who was in Boston, inviting him again to visit us there, which he did, remaining three weeks, not only conferring a favour upon us, but a great pleasure I am sure, to friends who had cottages near us. My servants, I have had many years and they are all still with me. Some of them went with us to Annisquam, the others were at home. You can see how wholly without foundation are all these stories. Who this woman in Detroit is, of whom you speak, I do not know. I only know this that every

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word of her story is as untrue and false as possible. . . . We all know Vivekananda. Who are they that they speak so falsely?

"This dignified and powerful refutation of the scandals circulated against the Swami," says "The Life," "was supplemented by another letter written on the following day by Mrs. Bagley's daughter":

> I am glad to know that the story was not circulated by R——. If I find it possible I wish to see Mrs. S—— and ask her what her authority for such a statement was. I shall do it quietly of course, but I am going to find out for once, if possible, who starts these lies about Vivekananda. These things travel fast, and if once one is uprooted, perhaps these women will stop to think before they circulate a story so readily. If only they would investigate them they would find how false they all are. . . .

It is significant that the only public rejoinder of any importance to the lecture on "Christian Missions in India" came from outside Detroit when, on March 21, the Reverend R. A. Hume, the director of a mission in India, wrote an open letter to Swamiji in an obvious but unsuccessful attempt to draw him into a public debate. Swamiji replied briefly to this letter, whereupon Hume, having received little satisfaction, again stated what he considered to be his case, and there, for the time being, the matter rested. This correspondence, according to Hume's wish, was published in the *Detroit Free Press* of April 8, 1894, and later led to a long-drawn-out controversy in which Swamiji took no part. The Rev. Mr. Hume, who, as readers may remember, had said at the Parliament of Religions: "In a generation all the positions of influence and responsibility will be in the hands of the Christian community of India," wrote his first letter to Swamiji from Auburndale, Massachusetts, on March 21, 1894. It commenced:

> Swami Vivekananda,
>
> My Fellow-countryman from India:
>
> A Detroit Free Press of March 12, 1894, has just been sent me, giving a long report of your address in the Detroit Opera House on March 11. As one who was born in India and has spent most of his life there, who has traveled there extensively,

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and known leaders of Indian thought in all parts, and seen hundreds of missionaries in their work, I am surprised at many things which you are reported as having said. Therefore I write you this letter and first send it privately, with the hope that in reply you will wish decidedly to modify the impression made by that report. But as that has been printed, I desire afterwards to have this letter printed, and, if you wish, to have your answer also printed.

Much as I should like to speak of many things in your reported address, it seems better to touch only a few points.

The remainder of Hume's letter occupies a column of small type two feet long. As this seems too much to impose upon the present reader, I shall give a summary of Hume's points. There were eight of them.

1. Hume expressed surprise and regret that the Swami did not have one good thing to say about Christian missionaries in India and declared that the majority of missionaries were college graduates and self-sacrificing men and women who spoke the vernaculars better than any other group of foreigners. In defense of their activity he quoted from a report of the director of public instruction in Madras, and also from an appreciative editorial in the *Hindu,* a daily paper published in Madras for and by Hindus.

2. Hume did not approve of Swamiji's disparagement of Christian converts and stated that whatever insincerity and venality there might be in some was "manifestly due, not to their Christianity but to their Hinduism."

3. Hume was astonished that Swamiji had said that the interest in America in foreign missions was probably due to a decline of Christianity at home. He countered by saying that if Christianity were declining at home, the people would not be so interested in spreading their religion abroad.

4. Hume denied that missionaries vilified the people of India and spread vile falsehoods about them. Some of the stories, he admitted, might not apply to the whole of India, but were true of parts of India that Swamiji had not visited.

5. He then proceeded to give Swamiji an overall picture of the Indian people and their religion, a picture that was ninety-nine per cent condemnatory.

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6. He further told him what the missionaries were trying to teach: they were trying to teach that God was universal and that Jesus Christ was the only savior.

7. In substantiation of the missionaries' belief that only Christianity could save India, Hume quoted from Kipling: "What's the matter with this country is not in the least political, but an all-round entanglement of physical, social, and moral evils and corruptions, all more or less due to the unnatural treatment of women. . . . The foundations of their life are rotten—utterly rotten."

8. In conclusion Hume challenged Swamiji to invite his audience to come to India and help the Hindus. "You are not likely," he said, "to get more than a few travelers who would like your help in studying theosophy and jugglery and in seeing the country." The fact was, Hume said, that the Christian missionaries were the only body of foreigners who had come to India and who were willing to serve her.

Swamiji wrote a hurried reply to Hume, confining his remarks, for the most part, to correcting certain statements falsely imputed to him. Other than this he neither modified the *Detroit Free Press* report of his lecture nor repeated it. His letter read as follows:

Detroit, March 29, 1894

Dear Brother,—Your letter just reached me here. I am in a hurry, so excuse a few points which I would take the liberty of correcting you in.

In the first place, I have not one word to say against any religion or founder of religion in the world—whatever you may think of our religion. All religions are sacred to me. Secondly, it is a misstatement that I said that missionaries do not learn our vernaculars. I still stick to my statement that few, if any, of them pay any attention to Sanskrit; nor is it true that I said anything against any religious body—except that I do insist on my statement that India can never be converted to Christianity, and further I deny that the conditions of the lower classes are made any better by Christianity, and add that the majority of southern Indian Christians are not only Catholics, but what they call themselves, caste Christians, that is, they stick close to their castes, and I am thoroughly persuaded that if the Hindu society gives up its exclusive policy, ninety per cent of them would rush back to Hinduism with all its defects.

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Lastly, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for calling me your fellow-countryman. This is the first time any European foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested native by that name—missionary or no missionary. Would you dare call me the same in India? Ask your missionaries, born in India, to do the same—and those not born, to treat them as fellow human beings. As to the rest, you yourself would call me a fool if I admit that my religion or society submits to be judged by strolling globe-trotters or story-writers' narratives.

My brother—excuse me—what do you know of my society or religion, though born in India? It is absolutely impossible —the society is so closed; and over and above, everyone judges from his preconceived standard of race and religion, does he not? Lord bless you for calling me a fellow-countryman. There may still come a brotherly love and fellowship between the East and West.

Yours fraternally,
Vivekananda.

In Hume's defense it should be said that Swamiji had been misquoted in the Detroit papers as having said that Christian missionaries in India could not speak the native language. But although we know that he had been referring to Sanskrit and not to the vernaculars, the fact remained that the attempts of the missionaries to speak the languages of the people left much to be desired. Their often incomprehensible jargon was a standing joke among the Hindus. (Even Protap Chandra Mazoomdar, the Brahmo leader, an avowed devotee of the Christ and a great friend of the Christians, emphatically maintained in an article published in the *Outlook* that the Christian missionaries did not know the vernaculars as they were spoken by the people.) A few did, however, attain a working knowledge of the native languages, and with Hume's avowal of this fact Swamiji readily concurred.

But Hume was not content to let the matter drop. His second letter to Swamiji, written on March 31, was largely concerned with the linguistic talents of his colleagues. The important thing, he said, was that the missionaries knew the vernaculars. It did not matter whether or not they knew Sanskrit because even the best Brahmins in India had, he said, no real knowledge of that language. The fact was,

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however, Hume continued, that some missionaries *did* know Sanskrit. He himself knew four or five men who were well versed in that language. He named them.

Hume went on in this second letter to quote again from the *Hindu* in contradiction of Swamiji's assertion that the lower classes in India were not benefited by Christianity. In conclusion he avowed that he looked upon India as his own motherland.

Swamiji did not answer this second letter at all, and because of this he was later criticized as having evaded the main issues.

An article in the *Outlook* of April 28, 1894, editorialized upon the Hume-Vivekananda letters as follows:

MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

> Since the meeting of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago two or three members of that body have devoted themselves to lecturing in various parts of the United States against the missionary work in India. One of them—Vivekananda—has been speaking in Detroit, and, as a result of his lectures, an interesting correspondence has appeared in the "Free Press" of that city. The Hindu monk has met an able and courteous antagonist in the Christian missionary Robert A. Hume. We have seldom read anything more courteous and more utterly conclusive than the letters of Mr. Hume. The Hindu monk unqualifiedly denounced the missionaries; he had not one good thing to say about them. Mr. Hume begins his letter, "My Fellow-Countryman from India." He is entitled to begin it in that way because he was himself born in India and has spent the greater part of his life there. [The article goes on to summarize Hume's letter and then continues:]
>
> The reply of the monk is evasive, and closes with the simple assertion that it is not possible for foreigners to know the people of India, that it is not possible for Mr. Hume, even though he was born in that country. . . . The simple fact, to say the least, is that Vivekananda finds it quite as difficult to understand and appreciate the Christians as he imagines they find it difficult to understand his people.

Actually, as Swamiji said in the course of a letter, he suspected

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that Mr. Hume was trying to drag him into a public debate, into which he refused to enter. He had no wish to engage in a controversy with men whose outlook was narrow and superficial, for such debate could be nothing but a waste of time and energy. He again expressed his feeling on this subject when, at a later date, he wrote to Mrs. Hale: "I do not care the least for the gambols these men play, seeing as I do through and through the insincerity, the hypocrisy and love of self and name that is the *only motive power* in these men." Swamiji's stand in this matter was fully justified, for later the Reverend Mr. Hume was to show himself in his true colors. Sometime in August of 1894 Swamiji wrote to Dharmapala: "A retired missionary in this country wrote me a letter addressing me as 'Fellow-countryman' and tried to create a sensation by quickly printing my brief reply. But you know what the people here think of these gentlemen. This very missionary went to some of my friends in secret and tried to persuade them not to help me in any way. He received only pure contempt from them. I am surprised at this man's behavior. He is a minister of religion, yet what a hypocrite he is!" Nor was the Reverend Mr. Hume satisfied with his attempts to slander Swamiji in America; he later extended his activities to India. On September 9, 1895, Swamiji wrote to Alasinga: "If the missionaries tell you that I have ever broken the two great vows of the Sannyasin—chastity and poverty—tell them that they are *big liars.* Please write to the missionary Hume asking him categorically to write you what misdemeanours he saw in me, or give you the names of his informants, and whether the information was *first-hand or not;* that will settle this question and expose the whole thing." There can be little doubt that this is the same Hume with whom we are concerned and with whom Swamiji rightly refused to engage in debate.

But even had Swamiji wanted to give a point by point reply to Hume, he could only have repeated what he had already said many times to American audiences. Moreover, Hume's points, though couched in weighty language, were without substance. His central theme (points 5, 6 and 7 of his first letter) was that Hindu religion and culture were all wrong for the Hindus and that conversion to Christianity was their only salvation. Holding this view, it was inevitable that Hume would express surprise and regret that Swamiji had found nothing right about Christian missionaries (point 1) and that he had disparaged Christian converts (point 2). But Swamiji was convinced that one could not change the indigenous religion and culture of

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a people without destroying the people themselves. His view was that the missionaries could justify their presence in India only by being of real service to the Indian people and not by simply preaching Christianity to them. In order to render real service, an understanding of the religion and culture of the people was essential. Such understanding, however, was impossible without a sympathetic and respectful approach to Hinduism, which the Christian missionaries refused to make, and therefore Swamiji could not but condemn them. Further, the missionaries alienated the loyalty of the converts to their country and its heritage, directing it toward those who financed missionary projects and also toward the religious heads of the Christian churches, both of whom were foreign. That conversion of non-Christians creates problems of national loyalty is one of the unfortunate offshoots of Christian missionary activity, and one of which Swamiji was undoubtedly aware. There is, moreover, no denying the fact that missionary activity in Oriental countries has gone hand in hand with the conquest of those countries by Western powers. Just as such conquests have been considered to be political and economic colonialism, so Christian conversion has been looked upon as a sort of religious colonialism.

As regards point 3, Swamiji, as quoted by the *Detroit Tribune,* had said, "Perhaps the atheism and scepticism at home is pushing the missionaries out all over the world." This was a matter of opinion and not one for debate. There may have been many reasons, very different from the ostensible one, why missionaries went out to foreign lands, and the motives behind missionary activity were open to various interpretations. Swamiji's could have been a very good one. But that missionaries had spread false and vilifying stories about India (point 4) was a fact. It was one that Swamiji had vouched for many times, and one which he now could only have repeated. Hume's denial of the falsity of these stories was as absurd as his supporting contention that Swamiji did not know India.

Hume's further contention that the Christian missionaries were the only foreigners who had gone to India to "serve" the Indians (point 8) was neither here nor there. Their uniqueness did not necessarily make them either helpful or welcome.

In defense of missionary activity in India, Hume quoted from a report of the director of public instruction, who was, I dare say, an Englishman and a Christian. The director found that the students among Christian converts had a higher degree of English education

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than the students from Hindu communities. Swamiji was well aware that Christian missionaries provided schools and colleges in India and that, from a practical point of view, such institutions were helpful. But the value of education cannot be judged from a pragmatic standpoint alone. A foreign system of education which is superimposed upon any country is bound to be destructive, and the superimposition of English education upon India was certainly not to her best interests. Such education was not designed to make its students true upholders of Indian culture and religion; rather it implanted alien ideas in their minds and had the effect of turning them into hybrid products belonging neither to India nor to any other country. From Swamiji's point of view, the schools and colleges of the missionaries only made more complete the process of denationalization begun by Christian conversion. He could hardly, therefore, find them objects of his unadulterated praise. Indeed, shortly before his passing, he expressed the opinion that the introduction of English education in India had set back her progress by at least fifty years.

Hume also quoted from the *Hindu,* a daily paper of Madras, whose Hindu editor, a Mr. G. S. Iyer, had written appreciatively of the missionaries and their work. It should be mentioned, however, that while Mr. Iyer may have been a good editor, it does not follow that he was a good Hindu imbued with and loyal to the ideas and ideals that had sustained his country for millenniums. Sad to say, he and many other Hindus of his time (and of the present time also) were infatuated by Western culture to the neglect and disparagement of their own. The fact is that despite the name of his journal, Mr. Iyer was an opponent of orthodox Hinduism. In an article published in the *Vedanta Kesari* of January and February, 1923, which tells of Swamiji's visit to Madras in 1897, Professor K. Sundararama Iyer writes: "My G. Subrahmanya Aiyer [the then editor of the *Hindu*] had once been a very orthodox Hindu. . . . He changed to the opposite extreme of a social revolutionary."

To justify the work of the Christian missionaries, Hume also quoted, of all people, Kipling, an aggressive jingo. Indeed Mr. Hume's authorities were in themselves enough to disqualify his letter as worthy of serious consideration and reply.

As for his second letter, Hume's statement that few Hindus knew Sanskrit was absurd. India abounded in Sanskrit scholars. Moreover, the large majority of those Hindus who did not know Sanskrit were nonetheless imbued with the age-old philosophy and religion of their

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country. It was not necessary for the Hindus to be Sanskrit scholars in order to comprehend their own religion, whereas it was essential for the Christian missionaries if they were to understand India and Hinduism and were to be of service to the country. Hume's admission that very few of his colleagues knew Sanskrit was tantamount to an admission that very few knew anything about Hinduism. Hume did not say what attitude the few who knew Sanskrit held toward Hinduism. Possibly such a disclosure would have been inconvenient.

As regards the missionaries' knowing the vernaculars, how many were able to read the religious literature embodied in those languages? And of those who were able, how many read to discover the excellences of the Hindu religion rather than its weaknesses? Perhaps none. The result was, of course, an almost total ignorance of Hindu religion and philosophy.

Except through a thorough reading knowledge of both Sanskrit and the vernaculars there was no way in which the missionaries could learn the inner meaning of Hinduism, for in those days no one in India would have taught the religion of the Vedas to avowed enemies of that religion. While India has always disclosed her spiritual treasures to those who have come in earnestness and respect, she has always and traditionally hidden them from those who have sought to pry into her religion in order to destroy it. Swamiji was being literal when he said that Hindu society and culture were closed to Hume.

It should be mentioned here parenthetically that in its criticism of Swamiji the *Outlook* was not just in equating his relation to Christians with the missionaries' relation to the Hindus. Swamiji had a full knowledge of Christianity, he had a deep reverence for Christ and his teachings, and, as he again and again stated, he had not come to America to convert the people to Hinduism. Comparable things could not be said of the Christian missionaries in India.

As for Hume's contention that the Hindus of the lower classes were benefited by becoming Christians, the fact was that on the whole the benefit was so superficial as to be harmful. Certainly no one could have longed more for the economic betterment of the Indian masses than Swamiji, but not at the cost of their integrity. Cultural suicide should never, in his estimation, be committed for material gain. That had never been and never should be India's way.

But Mr. Hume and others like him were incapable of understanding this. Nor were they willing to understand. Swamiji did not work on the same plane where Hume lived and thought, and it would

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have been laughable had he engaged in a point by point controversy with him. Nor was there need for Swamiji to reply in any detail to letters such as Hume's, for the controversy was carried on by others. The Hume-Vivekananda letters set off a bitter debate which lasted into the early part of 1895 and which was published in various widely-read periodicals such as the *Forum,* the *Arena,* the *Monist,* and so on. The principal antagonists were, on the missionary side: the Right Reverend Mr. J. M. Thoburn, Missionary Bishop to India and Malaysia, Mr. Fred Powers, Rev. J. M. Mueller and Rev. E. M. Wherry; and on the Hindu side: Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi and Mr. Purushottam Rao Telang. Every conceivable facet of the subject was anatomized, dissected, thrashed out and rethrashed, until, by the end, if the American public knew nothing else they at least knew that there were two sides to the matter and that, as Mr. Telang had said, "to preach Christianity to the Hindu who had a religion and was civilized before the dawn of history seems . . . the most ridiculous thing on earth—indeed, audacious."

It is not hard to see, when we survey Swamiji's lecture tour through the Midwest, that his visit to Detroit marked its climactic finish. He had by this time spoken to every type of Midwestern American, his ideas had spread throughout the "Bible Belt," and there was perhaps not an orthodox minister who was not shaken by them, nor a person ready to benefit from them who was not uplifted. On both the intellectual and spiritual levels, he had poured out enough energy to revitalize a whole nation. He had done a major part of his work, and whether or not he consciously thought of it in this way, we can see from his letters that he knew it was time to move to the East Coast. The fact was that after Swamiji had delivered his lectures in Detroit, he had said all that was necessary for him to say in his battle with the missionaries, and he could well write to India: "The conflagration that has set in through the grace of the Guru will not be put out."

V

But was it merely to give battle to the bigots that a prophet of Swamiji's supreme eminence underwent such suffering as his Midwest lecture tour entailed? No doubt a question has been growing in the

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reader's mind as to the real meaning of this strange winter as well as of the period which followed when, released from the clutches of the lecture bureau, he continued to tour the country. Swamiji rarely mentioned the hardships he had to endure, and thus one is apt to forget them or, at least, minimize them. I have already mentioned something of the trials of the Midwestern tour; but that was not all: throughout his Eastern tour his work continued to make rigorous and exhausting demands upon him. A hint of these trials comes from a letter which he wrote to India in February of 1895. "In order to give lectures," he confided, "I had often to make my way through snow-covered mountains in the terribly severe winters and had to travel even up to one or two o'clock at night." From Swami Abhedananda we also learn something of Swamiji's incessant labor. In his lecture, "Vivekananda and His Work," the Swami says: "Sometimes he would be invited by people living in different cities hundreds of miles apart to give public addresses on the same day and he would accept in every case, travelling for hours by train or by any available conveyance."

I myself cannot but ask: Why did Swamiji undergo this ordeal? What did he think and feel during this time? What motives, conscious or unconscious, guided him, and how are we to interpret the significance of this itinerant period in relation to his mission as a whole? I imagine that the reader must have been asking himself similar questions, for as far as I am able to discover, no clear or satisfactory answers to them have ever been set forth in the biographies.

One cannot forget that Swamiji was at the peak of his youth and vigor during these many months. They comprised the best time of his life, when his spiritual power was fully matured and his mental and physical energies were still fresh. And it was during these months that he gave of himself unstintingly until, by the end of 1894, his health was already declining and his best energy going. This lecture-tour period, which extends from the time Swamiji first came to America until he settled in New York at the beginning of 1895, deserves, I believe, much more study than it has hitherto been given; for one cannot believe that Swamiji, "who was born on earth," as Sri Ramakrishna said, "to remove the miseries of mankind," gave the best of his youth and power without sufficient reason—a reason commensurate with his gigantic spiritual stature. (It should be mentioned here that while Swamiji's lecture tour cannot be said to have come to a definite end until he settled in New York, the last part of 1894 marks a transition in his attitude toward his American work. In

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Chapters Eleven and Thirteen the reader will find a discussion of this period.)

One can distinguish in the biographies three interpretations of Swamiji's activities during his lecture tour. First, it is said that he was preaching Vedanta to the West; second, that his primary object was to clear the ground of much that was false and detrimental in American thought, so that later on Vedantic philosophy might flourish in congenial soil; and third, that his motive was primarily to obtain material help for India, and also to destroy the missionary-created prejudice against his country, which choked American generosity and stifled reason. Broadly speaking, all three interpretations have been woven together and considered sufficient explanation of Swamiji's tour. But in studying this period I have felt not only that all three interpretations, whether taken singly or together, miss the mark, but that the first two are not even in accord with the facts.

When one tries to learn something of Swamiji's thought, not from what has been said of him, but from what he himself said and did, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the idea of teaching Vedanta to the West did not fully evolve in his mind until the last of 1894. It was a complex and profound idea, involving an intimate and mature knowledge of the characteristics and needs of the Western mind. As Swamiji later conceived it, Vedanta was the one unifying force of all the diverse religious, philosophical and cultural outlooks of man. He made it the philosophy of all religions, the ultimate goal of science, the justification of all social, moral, psychic and philosophical efforts of man to realize his own glory, and he made it also the method by which that glory might be fully attained. Vedanta, as he conceived it, was India's saving gift to the world, and for this reason he pleaded with his countrymen to become strong in order to give, and to give in order to become strong. In the early part of Swamiji's American visit one does not find this conception of the function of Vedanta in the modern world worked out in his mind and put into practical form. It was a development that required time.

Although Swamiji's mature conception of his mission was, of course, implicit in all his earlier activities, and although inevitably he taught some Vedanta in all his lectures—whether under that name or not—Vedanta being a part of his very nature, still we cannot read the concepts of 1895 into those of 1893 and 1894 without running headlong into complications.

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For instance, even a cursory reading of his letters written during the first nine or ten months of his stay in this country can leave no doubt that his conscious purpose in coming to America was to obtain material help for the masses of India, whose suffering he felt as only he could feel. "With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land, seeking help," he wrote on August 20, 1893. And again in March 1894 he said in his letter to Swami Ramakrishnananda, "I have come to America to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realization of this one aim of my life [the regeneration of India]." Again and again Swamiji made similar statements, and it does not appear to me that they are the statements of one concerned essentially with spreading Vedanta in the West. The intensity of Swamiji's desire to obtain American help for India can be gathered from the fact that he never gave up the hope of doing so. As late as April 1897 he wrote to Sarala Devi, a niece of Rabindranath Tagore: "My going to the West is yet uncertain; if I go, know that too will be for India. Where is the strength of men in this country? Where is the strength of money?" (It may be noted here that today, some sixty years later, Swamiji's dream of substantial material help from America to India is beginning to come true.)

Readers will remember that before Swamiji left for America in May 1893 he went to Hyderabad and there delivered his first public lecture. His subject was "My Mission to the West." It cannot be regretted enough that the biographers were able to obtain only one direct quotation from this lecture at a time when many who had heard it must still have been living. This single phrase, moreover, is, for unfathomable reasons, to be found only in the first edition of "The Life." The passage in which it is quoted reads as follows: "Finally he spoke of his Mission, *'which is nothing less than the regeneration of the Motherland,'* and he declared that he felt it an imperative duty to go out as a missionary from India to the farthest West, to reveal to the world the incomparable glory of the Vedas and the Vedanta."

Now I must confess to grave doubts as to the veracity of the indirect part of this quotation, which alone has been retained in the fourth and latest edition of "The Life." If Swamiji had proclaimed so early his intention of teaching Vedanta, then why did he not mention it again for so long a time? It is true that he spoke of the philosophy of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions, but from this

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it cannot be inferred that his intention in coming to this country was essentially to preach Vedanta.

On the contrary, the Parliament to him was incidental. After his return to India Swamiji said very clearly in his lecture, "My Plan of Campaign": "I travelled years all over India, finding no way to work for my countrymen, and that is why I went to America. Most of you know that, who knew me then. Who cared about this Parliament of Religions? Here was my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them? This was my first step." Again during an interview in India he explained, "My mission in America was not to the Parliament of Religions. That was only something by the way, it was only an opening, an opportunity." We know, moreover, that had it not been for the urging, the insistence, of Professor Wright, Swamiji would not have attended the Parliament at all. We know also that his first lectures in this country were not concerned with the preaching of Vedanta (Chapter One). Indeed, nowhere during the first year of his visit in America does he speak of the imperative duty of revealing the glories of the Vedas and Vedanta to the West, and nowhere does he ask that his disciples and friends in India help spread spiritual knowledge outside of their country. Rather, again and again he emphasizes his mission as the regeneration of his motherland, writing inspiring and fiery letters urging his disciples to dedicate themselves heart and soul to India alone—to her downtrodden, suffering millions. It is true that in a letter from America, dated December 28, 1893, he writes: "We will teach them [Americans] our spirituality, and assimilate what is best in their society." But for many months we do not again read of this idea, and although the thought may have occurred to Swamiji from time to time, it had not taken deep root in his mind. Indeed, it is not until around the end of 1894 that the prophetic idea of an exchange between India and the West rings out in his writings in unmistakable terms. On November 18, 1894, in his formal reply to the address which he had received from the citizens of Calcutta expressing their gratitude for the great services rendered by him in America to the cause of Hinduism, he writes: "Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. . . ."

After making a study of his letters, interviews and lectures, I myself cannot but believe that throughout the last part of 1893 and

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a large part of 1894 he was not conscious of the broad and world-encompassing mission which he later knew to be his. It was only toward the end of 1894 and the beginning of 1895 that the fullness of his message began to take shape in his mind and that he settled down to formulate it.

The second interpretation of Swamiji's activities following the Parliament comes from the pen of Swami Kripananda, more generally known as Leon Landsberg, one of the three people in America whom Swamiji initiated into sannyasa. In a dispatch to the *Brahmavadin,* Swami Kripananda wrote in regard to Swamiji's work: "Before even starting this great mission [of the teaching of Vedanta in the West], it was necessary to first perform the Herculean labour of cleansing this Augean stable of imposture, superstition and bigotry, a task sufficient to discourage the bravest heart, to dispirit the most powerful will. But the Swami was not the man to be deterred by difficulties. Poor and friendless, with no other support than God and his love for mankind, he set patiently to work, determined not to give up until the message he had to deliver would reach the hearts of truth-seeking men and women."

Now, there is no gainsaying the fact that one result of Swamiji's lecture tour through America was, as has been seen, to correct much that was erroneous in contemporary religious thought ; but to interpret his activities prior to 1895 as a conscious and deliberate effort to prepare the American mind for the message of Vedanta would imply that Swamiji intended all along to remain in the West to deliver that message in its fully developed form. We know from his letters that this was not the case. As late as September 21, 1894, he wrote to India: "I hope soon to return to India. I have had enough of this country. . . ."

It would seem, then, that the only warranted interpretation of Swamiji's outer activities during 1893 and most of 1894 is the third and most obvious one. It appears very clear from all the evidence we have at hand that the uppermost outward motives that guided him were 1) to raise funds for the development of his work in India, and incidentally to provide for his self-support during his stay in this country, and 2) to give the American people correct ideas of Hinduism, to combat the current misconceptions regarding India, and to inculcate the spirit of tolerance. With these correlated aims in mind, Swamiji joined a lecture bureau as the best means of carrying them

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out—*not* as the best means of teaching Vedanta philosophy to the Western world.

In other words, when we analyze the biographies in the light of history and untangle the motives which have been erroneously attributed to Swamiji from those that are in accord with his own statements and activities, we are faced with the strange conclusion that an illumined soul of the greatest magnitude gave his best energies to the task of earning money for India, of explaining Hindu customs and religion to the American people, and of answering questions asked, for the most part, by the ignorant, the bigoted and the dull! I, for myself, find it very difficult to accept this as a complete interpretation of the itinerant period of Swamiji's life in America. I cannot help thinking that his biographers have overlooked the essential significance of his lecture tour.

In reading the lives of saints and sages, it has seemed clear to me that the activity of an illumined soul must necessarily be understood on two levels. There is, first, the outer activity, which embraces the visible purposes of his life and which can be seen and comprehended by all in greater or lesser degree. But strenuous and inspired as such activity may be, it occupies only a part of his mind, by far the larger and more potent part operating on a level hidden from our view. Indeed, it would seem that the very essence of such a person consists in the fact that far beneath his surface mind are depths that are fully awake and fully absorbed in God. It is said that in its deepest levels the mind of a saint is so close to God that His effulgence forms, as it were, its very substance and texture. Surely that vast and silent part of Swamiji's mind, which was at one with God even while he was in the midst of the most "cyclonic" outer life, not only served to inform and illumine his surface mind but had a function of its own which constituted the true and special significance of his mission.

But strangely enough, this most important aspect of Swamiji's life has been given little importance in his biographies, and the chapters on his life in America have been so presented as to give the reader the impression that he was primarily a "man of action," a lecturer and writer—spiritually inspired, it is true, but first and foremost an *intellectual* genius. We do not see him as he must have been: continually in a transcendental state of consciousness, possessed of innumerable spiritual experiences of the highest order and, while undertaking the most rigorous of active lives, performing on a deeper level a service of incalculable value to the world.

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But before attempting to discover in what that deeper activity consisted, I should first like to make clear that I do not mean to minimize the importance of Swamiji's external accomplishments. The biographers have understandably placed a great deal of emphasis upon his magnificent vindication of India, his glowing and convincing oratory and his brilliant exposition of Hinduism in its various phases. All this was certainly the work of great genius and helped to establish India in the eyes of the world as a nation worthy of honor and respect. But I must confess that to Americans Swamiji's patriotism is not so important as it is to his own countrymen. And I believe that as time goes on and India forgets her past degradation and urgent need for national vindication in the eyes of the world, even she will see less glory in it. It would seem, therefore, a serious fault that in the interpretation of Swamiji's mission in this country the patriotic and intellectual aspects have been overemphasized, while the most important part—that which sprang from the depths of his being and which had unique and infinitely more lasting value—has been almost lost sight of.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the biographies of the other monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna are rich with accounts of their exalted spirituality and spiritual experiences, but not so that of Swamiji, although, as is well known, he was acknowledged by his Master and his brother monks to have been spiritually the greatest among them. The biographers themselves tell us this, but then, as though forgetting their own words, they seem to become bedazzled by the radiance of his external accomplishments to the neglect of all else. I am afraid that Swamiji has been done an ill service in this respect and that so one-sided a portrayal has left the way open to a great deal of misunderstanding.

For instance, some modern interpreters have carefully explained that Swamiji fulfilled the external aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's mission, while the vast legacy of spiritual power was embodied elsewhere! Again, one is shocked to read the following sentence in an essay on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda: "If he [Swamiji] had never visited Dakshineswar, he might well have become one of India's foremost politicians." Such evaluations are, I believe, the consequence of a failure on the part of Swamiji's biographers to emphasize strongly and consistently the fact that he was, according to Sri Ramakrishna himself, *nitya-siddha,* eternally perfect, and born to save the world. Surely it was no accident that Swamiji visited Dakshineswar.

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Other interpreters, taking Swamiji's activities during the lecture-tour period at their face value, have been led to remark that he could not have been receiving divine guidance at this time, for his mission was apparently of a temporal nature and was directed, moreover, by his own instincts and his own will. It has been suggested that, as far as his world mission is concerned, this early period was one of groping and of indecision and that, all in all, it was more human than divine.

Now it would seem to me that the blame for this judgment must also be laid at the door of the biographers; for to criticize Swamiji as not having been divinely guided simply because at times he seemed to decide matters for himself is to fail in appraisal of his spiritual stature. Not only was Swamiji divinely guided in the sense of receiving commands from God, but, if we are to believe the opinion of Sri Ramakrishna, he was himself *Ishwara-kalpa,* literally Godlike. Living as he did on the very borderland of the Absolute, his will was God's will, his every action the action of God. More than this, he was born with the tremendous spiritual power of a world-teacher. For the full appreciation and understanding of Swamiji's life, particularly in America where he gave his best, these things must be brought into prominence, for only then can we understand what Swamiji was accomplishing during his long lecture tour.

As I see it, by its very nature the deep center of an illumined mind shines out over the relative world, redeeming it and awakening it; and it was this activity, this shining forth in its full perfection and power, which constituted Swamiji's greatest service to America. The fact is that Swamiji's American devotees view him, not as an intellectual expounder of the Vedanta philosophy, but as the first great prophet sent to this country by God. Swamiji himself said that he did not lecture, he gave. Being what he was—a completely illumined soul whose heart cried over the suffering of all men—he inevitably poured out his blessings as the sun pours out its light. In and through everything he said and did his profound calm and peace, his boundless compassion for all humanity and his ready ability to awaken spirituality in others loomed large. And it was these things—not his patriotism nor his intellectual genius—that captured the heart of this country.

Wherever Swamiji went, whatever his external activities, his mission was, first and always, to impart spirituality to whoever was able to receive it. Such was his very nature. Whether he was answering questions regarding India's customs, lecturing on Hinduism, or castigating the bigoted and hypocritical, whether he was attending

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social gatherings or making chance acquaintances on trains or in hotels, he was, under all circumstances, shedding divine light. Quite literally he planted the seeds of spirituality deep in the hearts of innumerable human beings, changing the course of their lives forever. So spontaneously and naturally did Swamiji do this, that it almost seems as if he himself were not aware of it. But such "unawareness" has always characterized prophets and saviors—just as it characterizes the sun, which does not deliberate upon whether or not it shall shine.

It was during the period of the lecture tour that Swamiji came in contact with more people than at any other time; and if we accept the Hindu belief that every word of an illumined soul bears everlasting beneficial fruit in the life of the hearer, then we cannot even begin to estimate the spiritual effect of that tour upon the life of America. How many hundreds and thousands received his rare blessings as he went about from city to city in the Midwest, South and East we can never know. Possibly even many of those who received them were at the time not conscious of the fact, for blessings often work in secret though inexorable ways. Thus, although the outer purpose of Swamiji's tour was to collect funds for India, to spread a true knowledge of her culture and religion and to combat the slander broadcast against her, his deeper purpose was to fulfill the divine function of a prophet among the people of the Western world, mingling with as many as possible and blessing all. We in America believe that it was this last which formed the true substance and inner power of Swamiji's mission to the West, and we believe that America has been divinely favored.

Perhaps of all his interpreters Swami Abhedananda, who knew Swamiji as he was in this country, came closest to the American evaluation of him when, in his lecture before the Vedanta Society of New York on March 8, 1903, he said: "The preachers of truth are very few, but their powers are felt by those who happen to come within the atmosphere of their divine personality. Such a preacher of truth occasionally appears like a gigantic comet above the horizon, dazzling the eyes and filling the hearts of ordinary mortals with wonder and admiration, and silently passes away into the invisible and unknown realms of the universe. The late Swami Vivekananda was one of those great comets who appeared in the spiritual firmament once perhaps after several centuries."

Yes, truly Swamiji was in the fullest sense a prophet sent by God to America. He was a prophet who prepared us to meet the modern

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age, which not only needs the philosophy of Vedanta to solve its many and complex problems but requires thousands of spiritually awakened people to put that philosophy into practice and make it a living force in the future history of the world. And since such a prophet can fulfill his function only by mingling with the people, blessing them through his very presence, it would seem strange had Swamiji *not* traveled here and there, enduring untold hardships and giving of himself without stint. Only thus could he quicken and transform the inner life of this nation; and this in truth is what he did.

It was only after having fulfilled this essential part of his prophetic mission that Swamiji settled down in New York to establish a center, to give Vedanta a definite intellectual form, to write books and to train disciples. One might well say that during the first sixteen months of his American visit he lit the fire of spirituality in innumerable hearts, and then, during the next sixteen months, left a legacy of spiritual and philosophical knowledge by which that fire might be fed for centuries to come.

If I am right in thus interpreting Swamiji's activities during 1893-1894, then the reader will agree that this period forms the most, rather than the least, important part of his mission. It is to be viewed as an essential and indispensable part of his function as a divine prophet, and I believe that unless we look in this light upon Swamiji and all that he did, we shall fail to understand the true meaning of his visit to this country—indeed, we shall fail to understand Swamiji himself.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE EASTERN TOUR—I

I

"I am wearied of lecturing and all that nonsense," Swamiji wrote to the Hale sisters in the midst of the religious storm that was raging in Detroit as a result of his lectures and talks. "This mixing with hundreds of different varieties of the human animals male and female has disturbed me—I would tell you what is to my taste—I cannot write —I cannot speak—but I can think deep—and when I am heated can speak fire. But it should be to a select few—a very select few. And let them carry and sow my ideas broadcast if they will, not I. It is only just and a division of labor." But despite Swamiji's weariness, it was evidently the divine will that he himself should carry and scatter his ideas broadcast. There was no rest for him; indeed, the division of labor he wanted was not to be made during his lifetime.

Prophets do not make detailed plans; but when one views their life in retrospect one can see a broad plan unfolding itself. No sooner had Swamiji completed his mission in the Midwest with its climactic six weeks in Detroit than he began to receive invitations from the East Coast. He had now broken with the lecture bureau and was free to accept or reject whatever lecturing engagements presented themselves; he was also free to return to India, and considered doing so. "I do not care for lecturing any more," he wrote to Mary Hale on March 15. "It is too disgusting. . . . However, I will come back to Chicago for a day or two at least before I go out of this country." But despite Swamiji's growing disgust with continuous lecturing he chose to remain in America.

We cannot know, in this connection, whether he received direct guidance from Sri Ramakrishna or whether he was prompted by his own profound knowledge and will, but in any case his guidance came from a divine source. Of this fact he himself was always sure. "Through the Lord's will," he wrote to Swami Brahmananda, "the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into my heart, and I dare say never will. I am an instrument, and He is the operator. Through

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this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country. Thousands of men and women here love and revere me. . . . 'He makes the dumb eloquent and makes the lame cross mountains.' I am amazed at His grace. Whatever town I visit, it is in an uproar. They have named me 'the cyclonic Hindu.' Remember, it is His will—I am a voice without a form." Again he writes: "I am now making for the east. Where the noose will get tied to my feet, He knows." Thus, moving as he was led, Swamiji made arrangements to leave the Middle West for New England.

But before telling of Swamiji's life on the East Coast I must regress a moment to fill in a blank spot in the story of his Midwestern tour. It will be remembered that during his stay in Detroit he made two side trips, one on February 23 to Ada, Ohio, and the other on March 20 to Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan. The story of these trips was put off as being an interruption to the Detroit narrative, but I believe it should be told now.

When Swamiji visited Ada, Ohio, he was still under the direction of the lecture bureau, which no doubt chose that small town as a likely place for a lecture because, being the seat of the Ohio Northern University, a Methodist college founded in 1871, it was apt to provide a large audience. It did. The *Ada Record,* a weekly and the town's only contemporary newspaper, gives an account of Swamiji's lecture there. Although the eyes of the reporter were none too keen when looking at the speaker, one can nevertheless visualize through them the audience—an interested, alert and perhaps astonished group of people who bombarded Swamiji with all sorts of questions, but most of which evinced a real interest in Hinduism.

The following announcement and article are from the *Ada Record* of February 21 and 28 respectively:

> Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu Monk who is to his country what Joseph Cook is to ours, will lecture in the opera house next Friday evening, February 22, on the "Divinity of Man."

THE LECTURE

> The lecture on the Divinity of Man by Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu monk, drew a packed house at the Opera last Friday evening.

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The Lecturer did not appear on the platform until 8:30. In personal appearance he is well built, smooth faced, about middle age. His jaws are broad, eyes small, bright and close together. His skin is very dark. His choice of words showed him to be an educated man and we have heard that he was a graduate of an American college.

He stated that the fundamental basis of all religions was belief in the soul which is the real man, and something beyond both mind and matter, and proceeded to demonstrate the proposition. The existence of things material are dependent on something else. The mind is mortal because changeable. Death is simply a change.

The soul uses the mind as an instrument and through it affects the body. The soul should be made conscious of its powers. The nature of man is pure and holy but it becomes clouded. In our religion every soul is trying to regain its own nature. The mass of our people believe in the individuality of the soul. We are forbidden to preach that ours is the only true religion. Continuing the speaker said: "I am a spirit and not matter. The religion of the West hopes to again live with their body. Ours teaches there can not be such a state. We say freedom of the soul instead of salvation." The lecture proper lasted but 30 minutes but the president of the lecture committee had announced that at the close of the lecture the speaker would answer any questions propounded him. He gave that opportunity and liberal use was made of the privilege. They came from preachers and professors, physicians and philosophers, from citizens and students, from saints and sinners, some were written but dozens arose in their seats and propounded their questions directly. The speaker responded to all—mark the word, please—in an affable manner and in several instances turned the laugh on the inquirer. They kept up the fusilade for nearly an hour; when the speaker begged to be excused from further labor there yet remained a large pile of unanswered questions. He was an artful dodger on many of the questions. From his answers we glean the following additional statements in regard to the Hindu belief and teachings: They believe in the incarnation of man. One of their teachings is to the effect that their God Krishna was born of a virgin about 5000 years ago in the North of India.

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The story is very similar to the Biblical history of Christ, only their God was accidently killed. They believe in evolution and the transmigration of souls: i.e., our souls once inhabited some other living thing, a bird, fish or animal, and on our death will go into some other organism. In reply to the inquiry where these souls were before they came into this world he said they were in other worlds. The soul is the permanent basis of all existence. There was no time when there was no God, therefore no time when there was no creation. Buddists [sic] do not believe in a personal god; I am no Buddist. Mohammed is not worshiped in the same sense as Christ. Mohammed believes in Christ but denies he is God. The earth was peopled by evolution and not special selection [creation]. God is the creator and nature the created. We do not have prayer save for the children and then only to improve the mind. Punishment for sin is comparatively immediate. Our actions are not of the soul and can therefore be impure. It is our spirit that becomes perfect and holy. There is no resting place for the soul. It has no material qualities. Man assumes the perfect state when he realizes he is a spirit. Religion is the manifestation of the soul nature. The deeper they see is what makes one holier than another. Worship is feeling the holiness of God. Our religion does not believe in missions and teaches that man should love God for love's sake and his neighbor in spite of himself. The people of the West struggle too hard; repose is a factor of civilization. We do not lay our infirmities to God. There is a tendency toward a union of religions.

Evidently the St. Louis rumor that Swamiji was a "graduate of an American college" (Chapter Four) had rapidly filtered through the Midwest. Although this news must have brought comfort to Ada's Methodist university, the *Ada Record* was no doubt innocent in its repetition of what had been malicious in origin. It was innocent also in its comparison of Swamiji with Joseph Cook, one of America's most popular fire-and-brimstone orators who, at the Parliament of Religions, had had no patience with the motto: "Tolerance, Fraternity." The comparison was, in a sense, a compliment, for it was no doubt made in regard to the Reverend Mr. Cook's fame and influence, not to his religious convictions.

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Swamiji's engagements in Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan, in the last part of March were, like that in Ada, probably also made under the direction of the lecture bureau, for, as is seen from the following item that appeared in the *Detroit Tribune* of March 17, they must have been booked prior to March 15, which was around the time Swamiji broke his contract.

KANANDA AT BAY CITY

> Bay City, Mich., Special, March 16—Kananda, the Hindu monk, is booked for a lecture here next Tuesday evening. He could not secure any of the local churches and his lecture will be given at the old roller skating rink on Washington Avenue.

While it is conceivable that the Bay City clergy refused Swamiji a roof, "the old roller skating rink" sounds as though he were forced to lecture in a broken-down, abandoned, barnlike structure, and this may have been the impression that the Bay City reporter meant to convey. Actually, however, the term had no such connotation, for the old roller-skating rink was currently the Bay City Opera House, where, very likely, the Metropolitan Opera Company made one-night stands in the course of its tours through the country. There was nothing wrong with the old rink.

Although the Bay City clergy may have turned their backs on Swamiji and cautioned their flocks to do likewise, other sections of the population welcomed him with joy at having so distinguished a visitor. The papers heralded his coming with items such as: "All about Hindooism at the Opera house this evening," and "Bay City people have a rare opportunity listening to an exponent on Paganism, Tuesday evening, March 20, at Washington Avenue rink." The following more lengthy reports are taken from two Bay City newspapers: the *Times Press* and the *Daily Tribune*:

BAY CITY TIMES PRESS
March 19, 1894

> Reserve seats on sale for Vive Kananda's lecture at the Opera House tomorrow evening [Tuesday, March 20]. No extra charge.

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The Hindoo monk has drawn larger audiences in Detroit than T. G. Ingersoll. His marvelous oratory, perfect English and depth of thought has attracted the attention of educated people throughout this country. He represented his people in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

BAY CITY DAILY TRIBUNE
March 20, 1894

The learned Hindoo monk Swami Vive Kananda who has created such a furor in the religious world, will lecture at the Opera house this evening, and indications are that he will have a large and cultivated audience.

BAY CITY TIMES PRESS
March 21, 1894

A HINDOO MONK

He gave an interesting lecture at the Opera House last evening. It is rarely that Bay City people have the opportunity of listening to a lecture similar to the one given last evening by Swami Vive Kananda. The gentleman is a native of India, having been born at Calcutta about 30 years ago. The lower floor of the Opera house was about half filled when the speaker was introduced by Dr. C. T. Newkirk. During his discourse, he scored the people of this country for their worship of the almighty dollar. It is true that there is caste in India. There, a murderer can never reach the top. Here, if he gets a million dollars he is as good as any one. In India, if a man is a criminal once, he is degraded forever. One of the great factors in the Hindoo religion is its tolerance of other religions and beliefs. Missionaries are much more severe on the religions of India than upon that of other Oriental countries, because the Hindoos allow them to be, thus carrying out one of their cardinal beliefs, that of toleration. Kananda is a highly educated and polished gentleman. It is said that he was asked in Detroit if the Hindoos

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throw their children into the river. Whereupon, he replied that they do not, neither do they burn witches at the stake. The speaker lectures in Saginaw tonight.

BAY CITY DAILY TRIBUNE
March 21, 1894

SWAMI VIVE KANANDA THE NOTED HINDOO MONK IN BAY CITY YESTERDAY

Lecture at the Opera House on the Religion of His Country—His Opinion of America

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Bay City had a distinguished visitor yesterday in the person of Swami Vive Kananda, the much talked of Hindoo monk. He arrived at noon from Detroit where he has been the guest of Senator Palmer and proceeded immediately to the Fraser house. There he was seen by a reporter for *The Tribune*. Kananda is striking in appearance. He is nearly six feet tall, must weigh 180 pounds and is splendidly proportioned. He has a clear olive complexion and beautiful black hair and eyes and clean shaven face. His voice is soft and well modulated, and he speaks English remarkably well; in fact better than the majority of Americans. He is polite to a noticeable degree.

Kananda spoke entertainingly of his country and his impressions of this country. He came to America via the Pacific and will return via the Atlantic. "This is a great land," he said, "but I wouldn't like to live here. Americans think too much of money. They give it preference over everything else. Your people have much to learn. When your nation is as old as ours you will be wiser. I like Chicago very much and Detroit is a nice place."

Asked how long he intended remaining in America, he replied: "I do not know. I am trying to see most of your country. I go east next and will spend some time at Boston and New York. I have visited Boston but not to stay. When I have seen America I shall go to Europe. I am very anxious to visit Europe. I have never been there."

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Concerning himself the easterner said he was 30 years old. He was born at Calcutta and educated at a college in that city. His profession calls him to all parts of the country, and he is at all times the guest of the nation.

"India has a population of 285,000,000," he said. "Of these about 65,000,000 are Mohammedans and most of the others Hindoos. There are only about 600,000 Christians in the country, and of these at least 250,000 are Catholics. Our people do not, as a rule, embrace christianity; they are satisfied with their own religion. Some go into Christianity for mercenary motives. They are free to do as they wish. We say let everybody have his own faith. We are a cunning nation. We do not believe in bloodshed. There are wicked men in our country and they are in the majority, same as in your country. It is unreasonable to expect people to be angels."

Vive Kananda will lecture in Saginaw to-night.

Lecture Last Night

The lower floor of the opera house was comfortably filled when the lecture began last evening. Promptly at 8:15 o'clock Swami Vive Kananda made his appearance on the stage, dressed in his beautiful oriental costume. He was introduced in a few words by Dr. C. T. Newkirk.

The first part of the discourse consisted of an explanation of the different religions of India and of the theory of transmigration of souls. In connection with the latter, the speaker said it was on the same basis as the theory of conservation was to the scientist. This latter theory, he said, was first produced by a philosopher of his country. They did not believe in a creation. A creation implied making something out of nothing. That was impossible. There was no beginning of creation, just as there was no beginning of time. God and creation are as two lines—without end, without beginning, without [?] parallel. Their theory of creation is, "It is, was, and is to be." They think all punishment is but re-action. If we put our hand in the fire it is burned. That is the re-action of the action. The future condition of life is determined by the present condition. They do not believe God punishes. "You, in this land," said the speaker,

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"praise the man who does not get angry and denounce the man who does become angry. And yet thousands of people throughout this country are every day accusing God of being angry. Everybody denounces Nero, who sat and played on his instrument while Rome was burning, and yet thousands of your people are accusing God of doing the same thing today."

The Hindoos have no theory of redemption in their religion. Christ is only to show the way. Every man and woman is a divine being, but covered as though by a screen, which their religion is trying to remove. The removal of that Christians call salvation, they, freedom. God is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe.

The speaker then sought to vindicate the religions of his country. He said it had been proven that the entire system of the Roman Catholic Church had been taken from the books of Buddhism. The people of the west should learn one thing from India—toleration.

Among other subjects which he held up and overhauled were: The Christian missionaries, the zeal of the Presbyterian church and its non-toleration, the dollar-worshipping in this country, and the priests. The latter he said were in the business for the dollars there were in it, and wanted to know how long they would stay in the church if they had to depend on getting their pay from God. After speaking briefly on the Caste system in India, our civilization in the south, our general knowledge of the mind, and various other topics the speaker concluded his remarks.

From Bay City Swamiji traveled to Saginaw, Michigan, where he lectured on Wednesday evening, March 21. Strangely and to the disgust of the editor of the *Saginaw Evening News,* he spoke to a small audience, this being one of the very few occasions on which he did not draw a record attendance.

There were two papers in Saginaw, the *Courier-Herald* and the *Evening News.* Both papers covered Swamiji's visit, and although they were evidently appreciative of his lecture, both were under the impression that he was a Buddhist. This confusion between Buddhism and Hinduism was not confined to small towns but

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existed even in Chicago during the Parliament of Religions. It was perhaps attributable in part to Edwin Arnold's widely read "The Light of Asia," and in part to the general ignorance which prevailed in the West regarding all non-Christian religions. In any case, Swamiji was often called by the press "a Buddhist priest," even *after* he had lectured. In the following articles the reader should, in most cases, substitute the words "Hinduism" and "Hindu" for "Buddhism" and "Buddhist." There was also some confusion in Saginaw regarding the title of Swamiji's lecture, which was perhaps due to the fact that he had intended to lecture on "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia," but changed to "The Harmony of Religions."

The following announcements and articles are from the *Saginaw Evening News* of March 19, 20, 21 and 22, respectively:

> Kanandah, the celebrated Buddhist, who created such a marked impression at the parliament of religions at the World's fair, lectures at the academy Wednesday evening. His topic will be "Buddhism."

> Swami Vive Kananda, the Buddhist monk, who lectures at the academy tomorrow night on "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia," has been the guest of Ex-Senator Palmer, president of the World's Fair commission.

KANANDA ARRIVES

> Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu Monk, arrived this afternoon from Bay City and is registered at the Vincent. He dresses like a well-to-do American and speaks excellent English. He is slightly above the medium height, is stoutly built and his complexion resembles that of an Indian. In answer to a question by a NEWS representative, he said he learned English from private tutors, and by contact with Europeans, who visited Hindustan. He further stated that his talk tonight would be explanatory of the religion of the Hindoo and to show that they are not heathen but believe in a future state.

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THE EASTERN TOUR—I

RELIGIOUS HARMONY

Kananda Talks about the Different Creeds

Buddhism Teaches Perfection on Earth

Charges that Christianity was Introduced by the Sword

Swami Vive Kananda, the much talked of Hindoo monk, spoke to a small but deeply interested audience last evening at the academy of music on "The Harmony of Religions." He was dressed in oriental costume and received an extremely cordial reception. Hon. Rowland Connor gracefully introduced the speaker, who devoted the first portion of his lecture to an explanation of the different religions of India and of the theory of transmigration of souls. The first invaders of India, the Aryans, did not try to exterminate the population of India as the Christians have done when they went into a new land, but the endeavor was made to elevate persons of brutish habits. The Hindoo is disgusted with those people of his own country who do not bathe and who eat dead animals. The Northern people of India have not tried to force their customs on the southerns, but the latter gradually adopted many ways of the former class. In southernmost portions of India there are a few persons who are Christians and who have been so for thousands [?] of years. The Spaniards came to Ceylon with Christianity. The Spaniards thought that their God commanded them to kill and murder and to tear down heathen temples.

If there were not different religions no one religion would survive. The Christian needs his selfish religion. The Hindoo needs his own creed. Those which were founded on a book still stand. Why could not the Christian convert the Jew? Why could they not make the Persians Christians? Why not so with the Mohammedans? Why cannot any impression be made upon China or Japan? The Buddhists, the first missionary religion, have double the number of converts of any other religion and they did not use the sword. The Mohammedans used the most force, and they number the least of the three great missionary religions. The

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Mohammedans have had their day. Every day you read of Christian nations acquiring land by bloodshed. What missionaries preach against this? Why should the most bloodthirsty nations exalt an alleged religion which is not the religion of Christ? The Jews and the Arabs were the fathers of Christianity, and how have they been persecuted by the Christians! The Christians have been weighed in the balance in India and found wanting.

The speaker did not wish to be unkind, but he wanted to show Christians how they looked in other eyes. The Missionaries who preach the burning pit are regarded with horror. The Mohammedans rolled wave after wave over India, waving the sword, and today where are they? The farthest that all religions can see is the existence of a spiritual entity. So no religion can teach beyond this point. In every religion there is the essential truth and non-essential casket in which this jewel lies. The believing in the Jewish book or the Hindoo book is non-essential. Circumstances change, the receptacle is different; but the central truth remains. The essentials being the same, the educated people of every community retain the essentials. The shell of the oyster is not attractive, but the pearls are within. Before a small fraction of the world is converted Christianity will be divided into many creeds. That is the law of nature. Why take a single instrument from the great religious orchestras of the earth? Let the grand symphony go on. Be pure, urged the speaker, give up superstition and see the wonderful harmony of nature. Superstition gets the better of religion. All the religions are good since the essentials are the same. Each man should have the perfect exercise of his individuality but these individualities form a perfect whole. This marvelous condition is already in existence. Each creed has had something to add to the wonderful structure.

The speaker sought throughout to vindicate the religions of his country and said that it had been proven that the entire system of the Roman Catholic Church had been taken from the books of Buddhism. He dilated at some length on the high code of morality and purity of life that the ethics of Buddha taught but allowed that as far as the belief in the personality of God was concerned, agnosticism prevailed, the

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main thing being to follow out Buddha's precepts which were, "Be good, be moral, be perfect."

Several among the audience remarked at the conclusion of the lecture that they would have enjoyed listening to the speaker much longer, and expressed a desire to hear him again. He is only 30 years of age, a finished scholar and one who has the reputation of high intellectual attainments. He was born in Calcutta and educated at a college in that city. His voice is soft and well modulated and he speaks English remarkably well. He leaves here for the east and will spend some time in Boston and New York. After he has looked over this country he will visit Europe, and when he reaches his own land will doubtless utilize the impressions he has received while girdling the globe.

The following editorial appeared in the same paper and on the same day as did the above article:

HE IS INSTRUCTIVE

And Hence the People Do not Care to Hear Him

What is the matter with the people of Saginaw, anyway? for several days it had been announced that Kananda, a Hindoo priest, was to deliver a lecture at the academy. He is one of the most distinguished men who has visited America in years. In Hindostan he occupies the same relation to religion and learning that Dr. Harper, Dr. Sumner, Dr. Elliot, and Dr. Angell do in America. He takes high rank among the learned men of the age, and came here to speak of one of the oldest faiths in the world. He speaks English fluently and is an orator. And yet this distinguished visitor talked to empty seats. Perhaps if Kananda would learn a skirt dance or could sing a tropical song the people would turn out to hear them [sic]. But inasmuch as his theme is instructive and strangely interesting he is denied even a fair audience.

The *Saginaw Courier-Herald* covered Swamiji's visit with the following article, which appeared on Thursday, March 22:

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FROM FAR OFF INDIA

Kananda, the Hindoo Preacher, Visits Saginaw and Talks Entertainingly before a Small Audience at the Academy.

Seated in the lobby of the Hotel Vincent yesterday evening was a strong and regular featured man of fine presence, whose swarthy skin made more pronounced the pearly whiteness of his even teeth. Under a broad and high forehead his eyes betoken intelligence. This gentleman was Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo preacher. Mr. Kananda's conversation is in pure and grammatically constructed English sentences, to which his slightly foreign accent lends piquancy. Readers of the Detroit papers are aware that Mr. Kananda has lectured in that city a number of times and aroused the animosity of some on account of his strictures upon Christians. *The Courier-Herald* representative had a few moments' conversation with the learned Buddhist just before he left for the Academy, where he was to lecture. Mr. Kananda said in conversation that he was surprised at the lapses from the paths of rectitude which were so common among Christians, but that there was good and bad to be found among members of all religious bodies. One statement he made was decidedly un-American. Upon being asked if he had been investigating our institutions, he replied: "No, I am a preacher only." This displayed both a want of curiosity and narrowness, which seemed foreign to one who appeared to be so well versed upon religious topics as did the Buddhist preacher.

From the hotel to the Academy was but a step and at 8 o'clock Rowland Connor introduced to a small audience the lecturer, who was dressed in a long orange colored robe, fastened by a red sash, and who wore a turban of windings of what appeared to be a narrow shawl.

The lecturer stated at the opening that he had not come as a missionary, and that it was not the part of a Buddhist to convert others from their faiths and beliefs. He said that the subject of his address would be, "The Harmony of Religions." Mr. Kananda said that many ancient religions had been founded, and were dead and gone.

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He said that the Buddhists [Hindus] comprise two-thirds of the race, and that the other third comprised those of all other believers. He said that the Buddhists have no place of future torment for men. In that they differ from the Christians, who will forgive a man for five minutes in this world and condemn him to everlasting punishment in the next. Buddha was the first to teach the universal brotherhood of man. It is a cardinal principle of the Buddhist faith today. The Christian preaches it, but does not practice its own teachings.

He instanced the condition of the Negro in the South, who is not allowed in hotels nor to ride in the same cars with white men, and is a being to whom no decent man will speak. He said that he had been in the South, and spoke from his knowledge and observation.

The lecture was interesting because of its uniqueness, and was worthy of a better filled house.

As in other towns, so in Saginaw, a Sunday sermon which took for its theme the superiority of Christianity over other religions followed Swamiji's lecture. We must, of course, be *interested* in other religions, said the Methodist minister of Saginaw, but let there be no mistake: the claim that there is something fundamental and permanent common to all religions "is seen to be a mere assumption when we compare the fundamental principles of Christianity and Buddhism," and so on. But no amount of talk could undo the effect of Swamiji's lectures on the minds and hearts of those who heard him; for truth, as Swamiji once said, is "a corrosive substance of infinite power. It burns its way in wherever it falls—in soft substance at once, hard granite slowly. . . ."

II

On March 15 Swamiji wrote from Detroit to the Hale sisters: "Your mother asked me to write to a lady in Lynn, I have never seen her. Is it etiquette to write without any introduction? Please post me a little better on this lady. Where is Lynn?" Evidently satisfied with the answers to these queries, Swamiji wrote to Mrs. Francis W. Breed of Lynn, Massachusetts, to make arrangements for a lecture and heard from her in reply. On March 30 he tells Mary Hale,

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"Mrs. Breed wrote to me a stiff burning letter first, and then today I got a telegram from her inviting me to be her guest for a week. Before this I got a letter from Mrs. Smith of New York writing on her behalf and another lady, Miss Helen Gould, and another Dr. (forget his name) [Guernsey?] to come over to New York. As the Lynn Club wants me on the 17th of next month I am going to New York first and come in time for their meeting at Lynn."

In his letters which are at present available Swamiji does not write of an invitation to lecture at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. But he must have received and accepted one before April 2, 1894, for in the Northampton *Daily Hampshire Gazette* of that date we read the following brief notice:

> Sumai Vive Kawanda, the Hindo priest who made such a stir at the parliament of religions in Chicago, will probably lecture in this city soon.

A few days later the date of the lecture was set. On April 6, the *Northampton Daily Herald* and the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* ran the following news items, respectively:

> Saturday, April 14th, Northampton people will have a chance to hear that most brilliant scholar, Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk. While there are few who agree with him in a religious sense, there are none who will not want to hear him either from curiosity or from some other cause.

> In speaking of Vive Kananda, the Hindoo priest, who is to speak in our city on Saturday, April 14th, Mrs. Gov. Bayley [Bagley] of Detroit, at whose house he has been visiting, says, "No one in the parliament of religions was more interesting than he, or their words more remembered."

Before Swamiji left the Midwest for the East Coast he evidently made plans to visit Boston as well as Northampton and Lynn, for the *Boston Evening Transcript* of April 5, 1894, ran a long article entitled, "Our Coming Hindoo Guest." With the exception of the first paragraph this article was made up of excerpts culled from the Detroit newspapers and has been reprinted in Volume IV of "The

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Complete Works" under the title, "Is India a Benighted Country?" It is with the first paragraph, however, that we are concerned here; it reads as follows:

> Suami Vive Kananda is coming to Boston in all the glory of his gorgeous orange turban and his advanced views on all topics, intellectual and moral. Everybody who had any interest in the Parliament of Religions while in Chicago knows of "Brother Vive Kananda," as he likes to be called. He had come to America on an independent missionary tour of his own, to see what he could do to aid in the return to spiritual conviction for this material and dollar-worshipping land. He is really a great man, noble, simple, sincere, and learned beyond comparison with most of our scholars. They say that a professor at Harvard [Professor John Henry Wright] wrote to the people in charge of the religious congress to get him invited to Chicago, saying, "He is more learned than all of us together." He is coming to Boston with letters to a dozen of the best known people here from leaders of thought, action and fashion—for there is a fashion in these things, too,—in Chicago.

Whether or not Swamiji lectured in Boston during the first part of April is not certain. Very likely he did not, for the Boston newspapers do not mention him again until the middle of May when, as will be seen later, he gave several lectures. A single item in the *Northampton Daily Herald* of April 13 leads us to believe, however, that he at least visited Boston in the early part of April, made many acquaintances there and perhaps gave one or two informal talks. The item reads as follows:

> A prominent Boston society lady gave a novel entertainment for Vivekananda. She asked all of her guests to bring their most puzzling problems, whether of philosophy, science or religion, and propound them to the Hindu monk. They came, they asked, they were answered, and departed, saying "of a truth the half had not been told."

Although at present we have no definite information regarding Swamiji's activities during the first two weeks of April, it is very likely

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that before going East he went from Detroit to Chicago to spend some time with the Hale family, whom he looked upon as his own and whose home he thought of as his "headquarters." Then, armed with letters of introduction, he probably visited Boston. But be that as it may, it is certain that on April 14 he lectured at Northampton, Massachusetts, and on April 15 at Smith College, which is located in that city.

We need not rely upon the newspapers alone for information regarding his visit to this quiet college town. As readers may remember, Martha Brown Fincke, one of the Smith College girls who came in contact with Swamiji, wrote her reminiscences forty-two years later at the request of the Swamis at Belur Math—reminiscences which were published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of September, 1936, under the title "My Memories of Swami Vivekananda." Although Mrs. Fincke's memory was not accurate regarding the date of Swamiji's visit (she placed it erroneously in November of 1893), and although her memory of his lectures was not vivid, Swamiji himself was indelibly impressed upon her mind. Through her reminiscences we gain an intimate picture of his almost awesome majesty, of his delightful childlike friendliness, and of the vast intellect and scholarship with which he trounced at every turn the "black-coated and somewhat austere" ministers and professors who came to instruct him regarding the superiority of Christianity. Although Mrs. Fincke's memoirs have already been published, I believe they should be included here, for it is through memories such as these that we can learn a little of the power and extraordinary luminosity of Swamiji's presence. Mrs. Fincke writes:

> At the close of the Parliament, in order to be independent of the personal benefactions of his admirers, the Swami engaged with a Lecture Bureau to tour the States beginning with the East, and early in November he came to the town of Northampton, Massachusetts. [Actually, Swamiji visited Northampton in April of 1894, after he had severed his connection with the lecture bureau.] This charming old town, half-way between New York and Boston, and since prominent as the home of Calvin Coolidge, is situated on low hills in the Connecticut Valley just before the river plunges into the gap between Mt. Tom and Mt. Holyoke. In flood seasons the low-lying meadows about the town shine with the

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covering waters and the purple outline of the Mt. Holyoke range forms the horizon to the south. Stately elm-trees border the streets and the place had then a slumberous aspect except when an eruption of students woke it to animation. For a women's College formed the centre of its intellectual life, Smith College, founded in 1875 by Sophia Smith for the higher education of women.

To this College I went as a Freshman in the fall of 1893, an immature girl of eighteen, undisciplined but reaching out eagerly for the things of the mind and spirit. . . . The College dormitories were not large enough to house all of the incoming class, so I with three other Freshmen boarded in a square brown house near the campus. This was kept by a lady whose independent spirit and humorous outlook endeared her to us, despite her despotic rule. College lectures for the whole body of students with compulsory attendance, were of frequent occurrence, and many well-known leaders of thought visited us.

On the Bulletin for November [April] was the name of Swami Vivekananda who was to give two evening lectures. That he was a Hindu monk we knew, nothing more, for the fame he had won in the recent Parliament of Religions had not reached our ears. Then an exciting piece of news leaked out ; he was to live at our house, to eat with us and we could ask him questions about India. Our hostess' breadth of tolerance may be seen in receiving into her house a man with dark skin, whom the Hotel had doubtless refused to admit. As late as 1912 the great poet Tagore with his companion wandered through the streets of New York looking in vain for shelter.

The name of India was familiar to me from my earliest childhood. Had not my mother almost decided to marry a young man who went as a missionary to India, and did not a box from our Church Missionary Association go each year to the Zenanas? India was a hot land where snakes abounded and "the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone." It is astonishing how little an eager reader like myself knew about the history or literature of that great country. . . . To talk with a real Indian would be a chance indeed.

The day came, the little guest-room was ready and a

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stately presence entered our home. The Swami's dress was a black Prince Albert coat, dark trousers, and yellow turban wound in intricate folds about a finely shaped head. But the face with its inscrutable expression, the eyes so full of flashing light, and the whole emanation of power, are beyond description. We were awed and silent. Our hostess, however, was not one to be awed, and she led an animated conversation. I sat next to the Swami and with my superfluity of reverence found not a word to say.

Of the lecture that evening I can recall nothing. The imposing figure on the platform in red robe, orange cord, and yellow turban, I do remember, and the wonderful mastery of the English language with its rich sonorous tones, but the ideas did not take root in my mind or else the many years since then have obliterated them. But what I do remember was the symposium that followed.

To our house came the College President, the Head of the Philosophy Department and several other Professors, the ministers of the Northampton churches and a well-known author. In a corner of the living-room we girls sat as quiet as mice and listened eagerly to the discussion which followed. To give a detailed account of this conversation is beyond me though I have a strong impression that it dealt mainly with Christianity and why it is the only true religion. Not that the subject was the Swami's choosing. As his imposing presence faced the row of black-coated and somewhat austere gentlemen, one felt that he was being challenged. Surely these leaders of thought in our world had an unfair advantage. They knew their Bibles thoroughly and the European systems of philosophy, as well as the poets and commentators. How could one expect a Hindu from far-off India to hold his own with these, master though he might be of his own learning? The reaction to the surprising result that followed is my purely subjective one, but I cannot exaggerate its intensity.

To texts from the Bible, the Swami replied by other and more apposite ones from the same book. In upholding his side of the argument he quoted English philosophers and writers on religious subjects. Even the poets he seemed to know thoroughly, quoting Wordsworth and Thomas Grey (not from the well-known *Elegy*). Why were my sympathies

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not with those of my own world? Why did I exult in the air of freedom that blew through the room as the Swami broadened the scope of Religion till it embraced all mankind? Was it that his words found an echo in my own longings, or was it merely the magic of his personality? I cannot tell, I only know that I felt triumphant with him.

[A Swami at the Belur Math] said that to him Swami Vivekananda personified Love. To me that night he personified Power. I think that I can explain this from my later knowledge. No doubt these great men of our College world were narrow-minded, of closed convictions, "wise in their own conceit." How could they accept the saying, "Whosoever comes to Me through whatsoever form, I reach him"? At Chicago the Swami recently felt the rancour of Christian missionaries and undoubtedly his accents took on an austerity as he felt the same spirit in these representatives of Western learning. To them Love would not appeal, but Power can awe even when it does not force agreement. The discussion, beginning with the utmost courtesy, became less cordial, then bitterness crept in, a resentment on the part of the champions of Christianity as they felt that it was "thumbs down" for them. And truly it was. The repercussion of the triumph that filled me then is with me to this day.

Early the next morning loud splashings came from the bathroom, and mingling with them a deep voice chanting in an unknown tongue. I believe that a group of us huddled near the door to listen. At breakfast we asked him the meaning of the chant. He replied, "I first put the water on my forehead, then on my breast and each time I chant a prayer for blessings on all creatures." This struck me forcibly. I was used to a morning prayer, but it was for myself first that I prayed, then for my family. It had never occurred to me to include all mankind in my family and to put them before myself.

After breakfast the Swami suggested a walk and we four students, two on each side, escorted the majestic figure proudly through the streets. As we went we shyly tried to open conversation. He was instantly responsive and smiled showing his beautiful teeth. I only remember one thing he said. Speaking of Christian doctrines, he remarked how

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abhorrent to him was the constant use of the term "the *blood* of Christ." That made me think. I had always hated the hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins" but what daring to criticize an accepted doctrine of the Church! My "free-thinking" certainly dates from the awakening given me by that freedom-loving soul. I led the conversation to the Vedas, those holy books of India he had mentioned in his lecture. He advised me to read them for myself, preferably in the original. I then and there made a resolve to learn Sanskrit, a purpose which I regret to say I have never fulfilled. Indeed as far as outward result goes, I am a case of the good seed choked by thorns. . . .

But thorns were no match for Swamiji's influence. Martha Brown Fincke is an example of the hundreds of people who came close to him and who received in their inner being the awakening touch of his spiritual vitality. Although she did not at once follow his teachings, it was only a matter of time before they bore fruit. Thus her memoirs conclude:

One reads of the seeds found in Egyptian sarcophagi, buried thousands of years previously and yet retaining enough vitality to sprout when planted. Lying apparently lifeless in my mind and heart, the far-off memory of that great apostle from India has during the past year begun to send forth shoots. It has at last brought me to this country [India]. During the intervening years—years of sorrow and responsibility and struggle mingled with joy—my inmost self has been trying out this and that doctrine to see if it was what I wanted to live by. Always some dissatisfaction resulted. Dogmas and rituals, made so important by orthodox believers, seemed to me so unimportant, so curbing that freedom of the spirit that I longed for.

I find in the universal Gospel that Swamiji preached the satisfaction of my longing. To believe that the Divine is within us, that we are from the very first a part of God, and that this is true of every man, what more can one ask? In receiving this as I have on the soil of India, I feel that I have come Home.

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It was precisely for this—that thousands might more quickly find their way "Home"—that Swamiji felt compelled to continue his travels in America, visiting as many places and talking to as many people as he could.

The Northampton papers, the *Northampton Daily Herald* and the *Daily Hampshire Gazette,* both heralded Swamiji's coming for several days in advance. The following items, which appeared in one or the other of these papers, are indicative of the wide fame which had come to him since the Parliament of Religions and of the excited welcome with which he was received wherever he went, be it to a small city or a large:

NORTHAMPTON DAILY HERALD

April 9, 1894

Swami Vivekananda, a high caste Brahman and a representative of orthodox Hindooism and a most distinguished figure at the parliament of religions at the world's fair, is to lecture in city hall on the evening of the 14th of April. He should and doubtless will be welcomed by a large and intelligent audience.

DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

April 9, 1894

An extract from the prayer of the Hindo monk, Vive-Kananda, at the parliament of religions, is "Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe ; help me to bear the little burden of this life."

NORTHAMPTON DAILY HERALD

Tuesday evening, April 10, 1894

Swami Vivekananda has been in Detroit lately and made a profound impression there. All classes flocked to hear him, and professional men in particular were deeply interested in his logic and soundness of thought. The opera house alone was large enough for his audiences. He speaks English extremely well and "is as handsome as he is good," says the Detroit News. [Copied from the *Boston Evening Transcript,* April 5, 1894.]

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DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

April 11, 1894

There is a good sale of tickets for the appearance of S. Vive Kananda at city hall Saturday evening.

NORTHAMPTON DAILY HERALD

April 11, 1894

At the Parliament of Religions Vivekananda was not allowed to speak until the close of the programme, the purpose being to make the people stay until the end of the session. On a warm day when some prosy professor talked too long, and people would leave the hall by hundreds, it only needed the announcement that Vivekananda would give a short address before the benediction was pronounced to hold the vast audience intact, and thousands would wait for hours to hear a fifteen minutes talk from this remarkable man.

NORTHAMPTON DAILY HERALD

April 12, 1894

Extract from prayer offered by Vivekananda at the parliament of religions: "At the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One through whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth. And what is His nature? He is everywhere the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All Merciful. Thou art our Father. Thou art our beloved Friend."

NORTHAMPTON DAILY HERALD

April 14, 1894

The famous Hindu philosopher, religionist, writer and speaker, Swami Vive Kananda, who speaks in City hall this evening, quite captivated the company of gentlemen who were invited to meet him at an Elm street residence yesterday afternoon. The many-sided intellect, subtle wisdom and broad-visioned culture of the student-priest of modest

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dignity are supplemented by a singularly magnetic attractiveness of personality, rendering this much-admired old-world visitor to our hero-worshipping new-world a man whom it is a liberal education to meet socially.

The day of Swamiji's arrival, Friday, April 13, finally came, and, as we have read in Mrs. Fincke's memoirs, "a stately presence" entered Northampton. The lecture given at the Northampton city hall, the import of which Mrs. Fincke failed to remember, was summarized and editorialized upon by the *Northampton Daily Herald* of April 16 as follows:

AN EVENING WITH OUR HINDU COUSINS

For Swami Vive Kananda proved conclusively that all our neighbors across the water, even the remotest, are our close cousins differing only a trifle in color, language, customs and religion, the silver-tongued Hindu monk prefacing his address in city hall Saturday evening by an historic sketch of the origin of his own and all other leading nations of the earth which demonstrated the truth that race-kinship is more of a simple fact than many know or always care to admit.

The informal address that followed regarding some of the customs of the Hindu people was more of the nature of a pleasant parlor talk, expressed with the easy freedom of the conversational adept, and to those of his hearers possessing a natural and cultivated interest in the subject both the man and his thought were intensely interesting for more reasons than can be given here. But to others the speaker was disappointing in not covering a larger scope in his word-pictures, the address, although extremely lengthy for the American lecture-platform, referring to very few of the "customs and manners" of the peculiar people considered, and of whose personal, civil, home, social and religious life much more would have been gladly heard from this one of the finest representatives of this oldest of races, which the average student of human nature should find preeminently interesting but really knows the least about.

The allusions to the life of the Hindu began with a picture of the birth of the Hindu boy, his introduction to

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educational training, his marriage, slight reference to the home life but not what was expected, the speaker diverging frequently to make comparative comments on the customs and ideas of his own and English-speaking races, socially, morally and religiously, the inference in all cases being clearly in favor of his own, although most courteously, kindly and gracefully expressed. Some of his auditors who are tolerably well posted as to social and family conditions among the Hindoos of all classes would have liked to have asked the speaker a challenging question or two on a good many of the points he touched upon. For instance, when he so eloquently and beautifully portrayed the Hindu idea of womanhood as the divine motherhood ideal, to be forever reverenced, even worshipped with a devotion of loyalty such as the most woman-respecting unselfish and truest of American sons, husbands and fathers cannot even conceive of, one would have liked to know what the reply would have been to the query as to how far this beautiful theory is exemplified in practice in the majority of Hindu homes, which hold wives, mothers, daughters and sisters.

The rebuke to the greed for gain, the national vice of luxury-seeking, self-seeking, the "dollar-caste" sentiment which taints the dominant white European and American races to their mortal danger, morally and civilly, was only too just and superbly well-put, the slow, soft, quiet, unimpassioned musical voice embodying its thought with all the power and fire of the most vehement physical utterance, and went straight to the mark like the "Thou art the man" of the prophet. But when this learned Hindu nobleman by birth, nature and culture attempts to prove,—as he repeatedly did in his frequent and apparently half-unconscious digressions from the special point under consideration,—that the distinctively self-centered, self-cultivating, preeminently self-soulsaving, negative and passive, not to say selfishly indolent religion of his race has proven itself superior in its usefulness to the world to the vitally aggressive, self-forgetful, do-good-unto-others-first-last-and-always, go-ye-into-all-the-world and *work* religion which we call Christianity, in whose name nine tenths of all the really practical moral, spiritual and philanthropic work of the world has been and is being done, what-

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ever sad and gross mistakes have been made by its unwise zealots, he attempts a large contract.

But to see and hear Swami Vive Kananda is an opportunity which no intelligent fair-minded American ought to miss if one cares to see a shining light of the very finest product of the mental, moral and spiritual culture of a race which reckons its age by thousands where we count ours by hundreds and is richly worth the study of every mind.

Sunday afternoon the distinguished Hindu spoke to the students of Smith college at the vesper service, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man being, virtually, his theme, and that the address made a deep impression is evinced by the report of every auditor, the broadest liberality of true religious sentiment and precept characterizing the whole trend of thought.

It was no doubt Swamiji's "attempts to prove" the value of the Hindu religion that incited the learned doctors and ministers to call upon him after the lecture. We know from Mrs. Fincke's memoirs what took place—a scene which was undoubtedly repeated in almost every town Swamiji visited and which evoked a feeling of triumph and exaltation in the hearts of those witnesses who, spiritually undernourished by the dry and narrow exhortations of their parish ministers, found a rich delight in hearing Swamiji champion so powerfully and so adroitly the cry of their own souls.

The following afternoon, Sunday, April 15, Swamiji spoke at Smith College. With the exception of the last paragraph of the above quotation, all we know of this lecture comes to us from a short item in the *Smith College Monthly* of May, 1894, which reads as follows:

On Sunday, April 15, Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk whose scholarly exposition of Brahmanism caused such favorable comment at the Congress of Religions, spoke at Vespers.—We say much of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, but few understand the meaning of these words. True brotherhood is possible only when the soul draws so near to the All-Father that jealousies and petty claims of superiority must vanish because we are so much above them. We must take care lest we become like the frog of the well in

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the old Hindoo story, who, having lived for a long time in a small place, at last denied the existence of a larger space.

From Northampton Swamiji went to Lynn, Massachusetts, an industrial city some ten miles from Boston. Lynn is known primarily for its manufacture of shoes and also for the fact that Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, lived there in the mid-nineteenth century before embarking upon her mission. Swamiji's hostess, Mrs. Francis W. Breed, was one of Lynn's social leaders. Originally from Chicago, where she no doubt had known the Hale family, she married a prominent Lynn boot and shoe manufacturer. Mr. Breed also owned a leather company and was, at the time of Swamiji's visit, extremely wealthy. The Breeds had several children and lived in an enormous house where they entertained extensively and with an extravagance typical of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, Mrs. Breed, according to all reports, was something of a *grande dame,* strikingly handsome, commanding, dramatic and lavish with her money. It is said that she owned a Russian sleigh which was pulled by three horses abreast and driven by a coachman. In the winter time, ensconced in black furs, Mrs. Breed would ride majestically in this sleigh through the streets of Lynn, exciting, no doubt, the awe of the populace. Had Swamiji visited her earlier in the year he would surely have had a Russian sleigh ride, but by mid-April the snow had melted and spring was on its way. Nevertheless, if the Russian sleigh was typical of Mrs. Breed's expensive tastes, then, winter or spring, Swamiji was entertained during his week in Lynn with a good deal of imagination and flourish.

Swamiji gave two lectures in Lynn, the first on the afternoon of April 17 at the North Shore Club—a woman's club of which Mrs. Breed was a charter member—and the second on the evening of April 18 before the general public at Oxford Hall. Unfortunately there is no report of either to be found in the Lynn newspapers. With the exception of a notation in the Calendar of the North Shore Club to the effect that the April 17 lecture was entitled "The Manners and Customs of India," the following long announcement from the *Lynn City Item* of April 13 constitutes all the information available at present regarding the Lynn lectures. Although this article is composed largely of reprints from the Detroit papers and will, therefore, be familiar, it is quoted here in full, for it illustrates how far and how quickly Swamiji's vindication of India became known to the country at large.

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SUAMI VIVE KANANDA

The Learned Brahmin Coming to Lynn

Monk of India in Oxford Hall.

Suami Vive Kananda, a learned Brahmin from India, who came over to America on an independent missionary tour of his own to see what he could do to aid in the return to spiritual conviction for this material and dollar-worshipping land, is coming to Lynn. He will speak to the North Shore Club Tuesday, April 17, at 3 P.M., and in Oxford Hall Wednesday evening, April 18, when the public will have the opportunity of hearing him.

He is really a great man, noble, simple, sincere and learned beyond comparison with most of our scholars. They say that a professor at Harvard wrote to the people in charge of the Religious Congress to get him invited to Chicago, saying, "He is more learned than all of us together."

In Detroit his lecture was prefaced with the statement that the speaker had been asked many questions. A number of these he preferred to answer privately, but three he had selected, for reasons which would appear, to answer from the pulpit. They were—

"Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of the crocodiles?"

"Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of the juggernaut?"

"Do they burn their widows with their husbands?"

The first question the lecturer treated in the vein that an American abroad would answer inquiries about Indians running around in the streets of New York, and similar myths which are even today entertained by many persons on the Continent. The statement was too ludicrous to give a serious response to it. When asked by certain well-meaning, but ignorant people why they gave only female children to the crocodiles, he could only ironically reply that probably it was because they were softer and more tender and could be more easily masticated by the inhabitants of the rivers in the

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benighted country. Regarding the Juggernaut legend, the lecturer explained the old practice in the sacred city and remarked that possibly a few in their zeal to grasp the rope and participate in the drawing of the car slipped and fell and were so destroyed. Some such mishaps had been exaggerated into the distorted version from which the good people of other countries shrank with horror. Vive Kananda denied that people burned widows. It was true, however, that widows had burned themselves. In the few cases where this had happened, they had been urged not to do so by the priests and holy men, who were always opposed to suicide. Where the devoted widows insisted, stating that they desired to accompany their husbands in the transformation that had taken place, they were obliged to submit to the fiery test. That is, they thrust their hands within the flames, and if they permitted them to be consumed, no further opposition was placed in the way of the fulfilment of their desires. But India is not the only country where women who have loved have followed immediately the loved one through the realms of immortality; suicides in such cases have occurred in every land. It is an uncommon bit of fanaticism in any country; as unusual in India as else-where. No, the speaker repeated, the people do not burn women in India; nor have they ever burned witches.

This last touch is decidedly acute, by way of reflection. No analysis of the philosophy of the Hindoo monk need be attempted here, except to say that it is based in general on the struggle of the soul to attain individual infinity.

A reporter of the *Lynn City Item,* who evidently had not read the above article and who obviously had not attended Swamiji's lectures—indeed, who was on the whole not very alert, wrote *another* announcement on April 20, a week later, as follows:

A learned Brahmin from India is to deliver two addresses in Oxford Hall, for the entertainment and probable instruction of the people of Lynn. Shades of Parson Cooke, defend us! And one of the addresses to the club composed wholly of women. How would that sound in Hindustan? The world is making rapid strides.

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Mrs. Breed was evidently as much of Boston as of Lynn, the two cities being but ten miles apart. Thus, during the week Swamiji stayed with her he not only renewed his friendship with Professor John Wright but made, no doubt, many new Boston acquaintances. Our information regarding this week of Swamiji's life comes to us from an unpublished letter which he wrote from New York to Isabelle McKindley on April 26. This letter, is, I believe, an extremely valuable one, for it not only helps us to trace Swamiji's activities, but provides an insight into his fortunes at this time: his victory over his critics, the state of his finances, his deep concern and regard for his mother and his growing dislike of continuous lecturing which coexisted with and was overpowered by his profound urge to awaken the people of America to spiritual truth.

New York
26th April

Dear Sister

Your letter reached me yesterday. You were perfectly right—I enjoyed the fun of the lunatic interior [Chicago *Interior*—a Presbyterian newspaper, which opposed Swamiji] but the mail you sent yesterday from India was really as mother church says in her letter good news after a long interval. There is a beautiful letter from Dewanji. The old man Lord bless him—offers as usual to help me. Then there was a little pamphlet published in Calcutta about me—revealing that once at least in my life the prophet has been honored in his own country. There are extracts from American and Indian papers and magazines about me. The extracts printed from Calcutta papers were especially gratifying although the strain is so fulsome that I refuse to send the pamphlet over to you—They call me illustrious, wonderful and all sorts of nonsense but they forward me the gratitude of the whole nation. Now I do not care what they even of my own people say about me—except for one thing. I have an old mother She has suffered much all her life and in the midst of all she could bear to give me up for the service of God and man—but to have given up the most beloved of her children—her hope—to live a beastly immoral life in a far distant country—as Mazoomdar was telling in Calcutta would have simply killed her. But the Lord is great none can injure His children.

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The cat is out of the bag—without my seeking at all. And who do you think is the editor of one of our leading papers which praise me so much and thanks God that I came to America to represent Hinduism? Mazoomdar's cousin!! —Poor Mazoomdar—he has injured his cause by telling lies through jealousy. Lord knows I never attempted any defence.

I read the article of Mr. Gandhi in the Forum before this.

If you have got the Review of Reviews of last month—read to mother the testimony about the Hindus in connection with the opium question in India by one of the highest officials of the English in India. He compares the English with the Hindus and lauds the hindu to the skies. Sir Lepel Griffin—was one of the bitterest enemies of our race. What made this change of front?

I had a very good time in Boston at Mrs. Breeds—and saw prof Wright. I am going to Boston again. The tailor is making my new gown—I am going to speak at Cambridge University [Harvard] and would be the guest of prof Wright there—they write grand welcomes to me in the Boston papers.

I am tired of all this nonsense—towards the latter part of May I will come back to Chicago. And after a few days stay would come back to the East again.

I spoke last night at the Waldorf hotel. Mrs Smith sold tickets at 2$ each I had a full hall which by the way was a small one. I have not seen anything of the money yet hope to see in the course of the day.

I made a hundred dollars at Lynn which I do not send because I have to make my new gown and other nonsense.

Do not expect to make any money at Boston Still I must touch the Brain of *America* and stir it up if I can

Your loving brother
Vivekananda

III

Originally, Swamiji had arranged to go to New York before visiting Lynn, but as matters turned out it was not until April 24 that he spoke before Mrs. Smith's "Conversation Circle" at the Waldorf Hotel. The little that we are able to discover regarding

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this lecture comes from an item in the *New York Daily Tribune* of April 25:

A LECTURE ON "INDIA AND HINDUISM."

Swami Vivekananda lectured before Mrs. Arthur Smith's conversation circle last evening at the Waldorf on "India and Hinduism." Miss Sara Humbert, contralto, and Miss Annie Wilson, soprano, sang several selections. The lecturer wore an orange-colored coat and the accompanying yellow turban, which is called a beggar's suit. This is worn when a Buddhist has given up "everything for God and humanity." The theory of reincarnation was discussed. The speaker said that many clergymen who were more aggressive than learned asked: "Why one is unconscious of a former life if such a thing had been?" The reply was that "It would be childish to lay a foundation for consciousness, as man is unconscious of his birth in this life, and also of much that has transpired."

The speaker said that "no such thing" as "a Judgment Day" existed in his religion, and that his god neither punished nor rewarded. If wrong was done in any way, the natural punishment was immediate. The soul, he added, passed from one body to another, until it had become a perfect spirit, able to do without the limitations of a body.

Among the large number present were Dr. and Mrs. Dewey, Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey and Miss Guernsey, Mrs. David King, Jr., Mme. Van Norman, Miss Phoebe Cousins, Miss Phillips, C. Amory Stevens, Charles A. Montgomery, Mrs. J. C. Ward, Dr. R. B. Karib, Canon Knowles, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Calvert, Roderick Perry Hughes and Mrs. Arthur Smith.

Swamiji remained in New York from April 24 to May 6, evidently lecturing before various gatherings, giving informal talks and meeting many people. In another hitherto unpublished letter written from New York to Isabelle McKindley he tells a little of his activities during that time. This letter also gives a glimpse of that side of him which was so childlike and gay even in the midst of duties that were irksome. (Although he dates this letter May 2, it is clear

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from the postmark on the envelope, as well as from internal evidence, that he wrote it on May 1.)

2nd May '94

Dear Sister

I am afraid I cannot send you the pamphlet just now. But I got a little bit of a newspaper cutting from India yesterday which I send you up. After you have read it kindly send it over to Mrs Bagley. The editor of this paper is a relative of Mr Mazoomdar. I am now sorry for poor Mazoomdar!! [The last two sentences were written crosswise on the left margin.]

I could not find the exact orange colour of my coat here so I have been obliged to satisfy myself with the next best a cardinal red with more of yellow.

The coat will be ready in a few days.

Got about 70$ the other day by lecturing at Waldorf. And hope to get some more by tomorrow's lecture.

From 7th to 19th there are engagements in Boston but they pay very little.

Yesterday I bought a pipe for 13$—mershaum do not tell it to father Pope. The coat will cost 30$. I am all right getting food and money enough—Hope very soon to put something in the bank after the coming lecture.

I have eaten a good slice of meat—just now because in the evening I am going to speak in a *vegetarian dinner!*

Well I am a vegetarian for all that because I prefer it when I can get it—I have another invitation to lunch with Lyman Abbott day after tomorrow. After all I am having very nice time and hope to have very nice time in *Boston*—only that nasty nasty lecturing—disgusting. However as soon as 19th is over—one leap from *Boston* Bake-beans to Chicago smoked-hams and then I will have a long long breath and rest rest for two three weeks I will simply sit down and talk talk and smoke.

By the by your New York people are very good—only more money than brains.

I am going to speak to the students of the *Harvard* University Three lectures at Boston 3 at Harvard—all arranged by Mrs. Breed. They are arranging something here too so that I will on my way to Chicago come to New York

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once more—give them a few hard raps and pocket the boodle and fly to Chicago.

If you want anything from New York or Boston which can not be had at Chicago—write sharp—I have plenty of dollars now I will send you over anything you want in a minute Don't think it would be indelicate anyway—no humbug about me If I am a brother so I am—I hate only one thing in the world hypocrisy.

Your affectionate bro
Vivekananda

(It should be noted by the Indian reader that Boston was famous for its baked beans and Chicago for its smoked hams. Swamiji was not referring to his own eating habits; he was simply poking fun at American specialties.)

Swamiji's second lecture in New York was given on the evening of May 2 at the home of Miss Mary Phillips, who had been among those present at Swamiji's lecture at the Waldorf Hotel. She later became one of his fast friends, offering him her hospitality and help, and he often used her home in New York at 19 West 38th Street as a sort of headquarters, giving it as his return address on many of his letters to India. Miss Phillips is spoken of in "The Life" as one of "the eager workers in his cause," and as "a lady prominent in many circles in women's charitable and intellectual work in the metropolis."

But to return to Swamiji's second New York lecture, the following small item from the *New York Daily Tribune* of May 3, 1894, tells what little we know of it:

A LECTURE ON INDIA AND REINCARNATION

Swami Virekanmda lectured on "India and Reincarnation" last evening at the home of Miss Mary Phillips, No. 19 West Thirty-eighth-st. He mentioned among other salient points regarding Hindooism, or Brahminism, that their religion bore no distinctive name; that it was considered that a belief in the truth of all creeds was religion, and that the belief that one certain dogma was the real and only religion was sect. The Karmic law of cause and effect was explained, also the external and internal natures in their close relations to each other. The actions in this world, as governed by

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a previous life and the change to still another life, were dwelt upon in detail. Among the large number present were Miss Emma Thursby, Roderick Perry Hughes, Professor Leon Londsberg, Professor Woodford, Dr. Holman, Thomas E. Calvert, a number of members of the Emerson Club, Miss Alice Ives, Miss Katharine Stag, Mrs. Samuel Swan, Mr. and Mrs. Doubleday, Mrs. Arthur Smith, Miss Caroline Whitcher and Isaac B. Mills.

It is interesting to note the names of those who attended Swamiji's first two New York lectures; for among them were many who were to serve his cause loyally for years to come. At the Waldorf lecture were, for instance, Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey, who became his close friends, whom he visited in Fishkill later that summer, and at whose home in New York he often stayed. At Swamiji's second lecture were Miss Emma Thursby, the famous singer, who was a friend of Mrs. Ole Bull's and who, together with Miss Phillips and Mrs. Arthur Smith, later became a member of the New York Vedanta Society. Then there was Leon Landsberg who, as is well known, became one of Swamiji's ardent disciples and with whom, as will be seen later, Swamiji lived for several months in New York. Actually Landsberg was not a professor, as was stated in the *Tribune* report, but a writer and newspaperman, employed at the time on the staff of one of New York's prominent dailies. Mr. Landsberg was, perhaps, something of a Bohemian with a disregard of, if not disdain for, convention. In Volume VIII of "The Complete Works," we find a letter written to him by Swamiji on September 13, 1894: "Forgive me, but I have the right, as your Guru, to advise you, and I insist that you buy some clothes for yourself, *as the want of them stands in the way of your doing anything in this country*. Once you have a start, you may dress in whatever way you like. People do not object." But of Landsberg, more later.

How many talks Swamiji gave at private homes and before clubs during his April, 1894, visit in New York we cannot know, nor can we know how many people of intellectual and religious influence he met, learning from them the current trends of thought and, in turn, giving their outlook upon life a new color and direction. In his letter of May 1 to Miss Isabelle McKindley Swamiji wrote, as will be remembered, "I have another invitation to lunch with Lyman Abbott day after to-morrow." Lyman Abbott, five foot three and of prominent nose

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and scraggly beard, was an extremely well-known clergyman who took an active part in social and industrial reform and in the religious and theological movements of the time. He was, when Swamiji knew him, pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn and the chief editor of the *Outlook,* an important and widely read magazine, with whose editorial staff, one learns from "The Life," he invited Swamiji to dine. It is very likely that Swamiji and Lyman Abbott had first met at the Parliament of Religions, where Abbott had read a paper of some length. Lyman Abbott represented the best of those Christian clergymen and writers of the late nineteenth century who, with reservations, became Swamiji's friends. Those reservations were, of course, inbred in the Christian divine. Nevertheless Abbott was obviously influenced by Swamiji, practically quoting him when he said in an interview given in May of 1894: "It is neither probable that we ever shall nor desirable that we ever should think and feel alike or express our thoughts and feelings in the same forms; if ever a church unity is brought about it will be by a common recognition of the essentials in which we are one, and a readiness to cooperate with the largest liberty in forms of life. The spring is one, though the flowers are infinitely diverse." This was a decided improvement upon Abbott's talk at the Parliament of Religions, in which he had said: "We believe that He is a speaking God, in all times and in all ages. But we believe no other revelation transcends and none other equals that which He has made to man in the one transcendental human life that was lived eighteen centuries ago in Palestine."

Yet, though Lyman Abbott presumably owed a widening of his thought to Swamiji, he was later to respond to a query from the Christian missionaries in India as to the truth of the alarming reports that Swamiji had "made hundreds of converts in America from Christianity to Hinduism" in the following words: "We are familiar with this phenomenon in America which gives in succession apparent converts now to Spiritualism, now to Hypnotism, now to Christian Science, now to Theosophy, now to Hinduism, a conversion rarely of either intellect or affections, still less of stable purposes, but partly of ardent impulses, partly of idle curiosity. Meanwhile the Church of Christ goes on its way increasing, as the statistics show, in numbers faster than the population, rapidly as that has increased, and as Christian activity shows, increasing also in rational and practical faith which believes more and more in deeds and less and less in dreaming."

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It would seem that when even a liberal Christian clergyman held out his right hand to Swamiji, the left clung fast to the pillars of orthodoxy.

Swamiji probably met other well-known Christian clergymen during his visit to New York. It is, for instance, not unlikely that Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey honored him at this time with the dinner party of creeds which one reads about in Constance Towne's article, "Swami Vivekananda As I Knew Him," published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of January, 1934. Although Mrs. Towne did not record her memories of her first meeting with Swamiji until some forty years later, it was an event which had remained vivid in her mind. If the Guernseys' Sunday afternoon dinner was given during Swamiji's first visit to New York, as one can reasonably assume it was, it must have taken place on April 29, this being the only Sunday in his brief stay. Of this somewhat incendiary affair Mrs. Towne, who at the time was Miss Gibbons, writes:

> . . . When I met him he was twenty-seven years old [?]. I thought him as handsome as a god of classic sculpture. He was dark of skin, of course, and had large eyes which gave one the impression of "midnight blue." He seemed larger than most of his race, who often to us appear slight of frame because they are small-boned. He had a head heaped with short black curls. . . .
>
> Our meeting was rather unusual. After his triumph at Chicago he was, of course, showered with invitations to come to New York, where the great of all the world are entertained. Here lived at that time a very famous physician, Dr. Egbert Gurnsey [sic], genial, literary and ideally hospitable, with a spacious and very handsome house on Fifth Avenue at Forty-fourth Street. It was Dr. Gurnsey's pleasure, heartily endorsed by his charming wife and daughter, to introduce celebrated visitors from abroad to New York society. It was to be expected that he would pay special honor to the great Swami, whose ideal of closer relations between the East and the West in the interest of religion and world peace so strongly appealed to him.
>
> Dr. Gurnsey accordingly arranged to give a Sunday afternoon dinner party at which every guest should represent a different religious creed, he himself holding the view-point of Robert Ingersoll, who was absent from the city. His Grace

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the Cardinal was interested but declined to dine or to appoint a substitute from among his clergy. So it happened that I, being a Catholic and trained by the noted Jesuit Priest, William O'Brien Pardow, S. J., had the privilege of being a guest at that famous Sunday dinner. Dr. Gurnsey, who was my physician, sent for me to uphold Catholicism. Dr. Parkhurst was there, and Minnie Maddern Fiske, the famous American actress, who was staying with the Gurnseys at the time. I remember that there were fourteen at table.

There was, of course, a tacit understanding that everyone should be polite about his or her religious differences with the Swami and his so-called non-Christian ("Pagan" is a hard word!) attitude. Alas! as the dinner progressed, the most heated dispute was not with the Swami at all. All of the differences were confined to the Evangelical brethren!

I was seated beside the Swami. We looked on in amused silence at the almost comical intolerance of the Creeds. Now and again our host would adroitly make some wise or humorous remark that kept the conversation on a plane not actually injurious to the function of digestion. The Swami would make from time to time a little speech apparently in explanation of his native land and the customs of its people so different from our own, but always to gain his point in philosophy and religion. A more broad-minded and tolerant man surely could not have been found anywhere in India to carry out the mission of founding Vedanta Centres in America.

He wore on that occasion his orange cassock, a cincture of deep rose-red silk, and his turban of white shot with threads of gold. His feet, otherwise bare, were covered by sandals of soft brown leather.

It was at this dinner that our friendship began. Afterwards, in the drawing-room, he said to me: "Miss Gibbons, your philosophy and mine are one ; and the heart of our faiths is the same."

Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, who attended the dinner, was one of the best-known clergymen of the day. He was pastor of the then fashionable Madison Square Presbyterian Church and liked to preach, as did many another contemporary minister, on current issues—

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political, economic and social. But, unlike others, Parkhurst did not stop at preaching, but had recently created an upheaval in New York politics. In a famous sermon delivered on February 14, 1892, he had denounced from his pulpit the mayor, the district attorney and the police, all of whom were, he declared, linked in an "official and administrative criminality that is filthifying our entire municipal life, making New York a very hotbed of knavery, debauchery and bestiality." These charges, not unfounded, created a sensation, and it was up to Parkhurst to substantiate them. Accordingly, disguised as a ruffian—a transformation difficult for the dignified pastor—he set out on a three-weeks' tour of New York's "dens of vice." The first-hand evidence he thus collected caused a second sensation and resulted, in 1894, in the defeat of Tammany Hall and the election of a reform mayor.

Although there is no record of how Swamiji and Dr. Parkhurst got along together at Dr. Guernsey's dinner party, one can assume that they did not find much in common. It would seem, all in all, to have been a strange and combustible gathering—an opinion shared by Miss Gibbons' mother. Constance Towne's memoirs continue:

> I then lived with my mother at the Beresford Apartments at 1, East Eighty-first Street, overlooking Central Park. My mother was Southern, of the royal French blood, from Charleston, South Carolina, and a famous beauty, dark of eyes and hair. She was a witty woman and delighted in the social pleasures centering about the Church of England, to which, she maintained, all the aristocratic world belonged. Thus the Swami and I were outside the fold. I told my mother of him on my return home from Dr. Gurnsey's dinner party, and what a splendid mind he had. I dwelt on the great force which had come to us. To which she replied: "What a terrible dinner party, with all those Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, and one black Pagan in orange cloths!" But she grew to like Vivekananda, to respect his view-point, and afterwards joined one of the Vedanta Centres. She was awfully amusing to him, and I can see him now, after all these years, laughing so gaily at her remarks about him.

While we are quoting Mrs. Towne's memoirs, an incident which must have taken place later than the spring of 1894 can be included,

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for it is illustrative of the sensation Swamiji made by his very appearance even in New York, a city to which the unusual had become the usual. Mrs. Towne writes:

> On one occasion there was an all-star cast in "Faust" at the Metropolitan Opera, on a Monday night when all society appeared to sit in their boxes and show their anatomy covered with jewels; to gossip, to visit, to come in late and be observed of all observers, and to do everything but listen to the opera. There was Melba in her prime, the de Reszkes and Bauermeister. The Swami had never been to the opera, and our subscription seats were in a conspicuous part of the orchestra. I had suggested that the Swami be invited to accompany us. Mama said to him: "But you are black. What will the world say?" To which he laughed and said: "I will sit beside my sister. She does not mind, I know."
>
> He never looked more handsome. Everyone about us was so wrapped up in him that I am sure they did not listen to the opera at all that night.
>
> I tried to explain the story of "Faust" to Vivekananda. Mama, hearing me, said: "Heavens! you, a young girl, should not tell this awful story to a man."
>
> "Then why do you make her come herself, if it is not good?" said the Swami.
>
> "Well," replied Mama, "it is the thing to do to go to the opera. All the plots are bad; but one need not discusss *the plot*."
>
> Alas for poor, vapid humanity and its foolishness! Later on during the performance the Swami said: "My sister, the gentleman who is making love to the beautiful lady in song, is he really in love with her?"
>
> "Oh, yes, Swamiji."
>
> "But he has wronged her, and makes her sad."
>
> "Yes," I said humbly.
>
> "Oh, now I see," said the Swami. "He is not in love with the handsome lady, he is in love with the handsome gentleman in red with the tail—what do you call him?—the Devil." Thus that pure mind reasoned out, weighed and found wanting both the opera and the audience.

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> One of society's pets, a very young girl, came down between the acts to Mama and said: "Mama is consumed with curiosity to know who the elegant man is in the yellow dressing gown."

Although in the 1890's hansom cabs, cable cars and horsecars, rather than automobiles, buses and taxicabs, crowded the streets of New York, and although the highest skyscraper was little more than twenty stories high, the city was already the metropolis of the Western Hemisphere, the humming center of New World civilization. People of all races, nationalities and creeds made it then, as now, a teeming world one could never fully know—an ever-changing kaleidoscope of human joy, suffering and striving. Swamiji evidently liked New York, feeling in its people an openness to new ideas and an energy which could bring those ideas to fruition. A glimpse of him in the very heart of the city, the clatter of iron wheels and horses' hooves on the rough stone pavement of Fifth Avenue no doubt echoing in his ears, comes to us through the poetess, Harriet Monroe, who writes in her autobiography, "A Poet's Life":

> Later [after the Parliament of Religions] I knew him quite well, and always I shall remember an encounter and talk years after in Fifth Avenue, when his eyes soared up to the tip of a sky-scraper, and he said something which made me realize that all this newness was as romantic to him as the old things are to us, and that his vision entrusted to our fresh energies his hope of a more united and glorious world.

Indeed, wherever Swamiji saw an expression of man's vitality and creativity, there he saw the vitality and creativity of the Divine Mother. Strength in whatever form spoke to him, as it were, on a deep level where man's energy as expressed in a skyscraper was not different from the divine energy sustaining and moving the universe. It was the same energy and power which he himself embodied.

In the autobiographies of others who had met Swamiji, one now and then comes across a few lines of recollection, and something of the dynamic force which emanated from him is vividly conveyed to us. Those who had met him only once never forgot him. The following few paragraphs are taken from "Heads and Tales" by Malvina Hoffman, the famous sculptress:

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India brought back one of my vivid memories of childhood, an exciting evening spent with a relative of my father's who lived in a modest boarding-house in West Thirty-eighth Street. In the midst of this group of old-fashioned city boarders was introduced suddenly a newcomer—the oriental philosopher and teacher, Swami Vivekananda. When he entered the dining-room there was a hush. His dark, bronzed countenance and hands were in sharp contrast to the voluminous, light folds of his turban and robe.

His dark eyes hardly glanced up to notice his neighbors, but there was a sense of tranquility and power about him that made an imperishable impression upon me. He seemed to personify the mystery and religious "aloofness" of all true teachers of Brahma, and combined with this a kindly and gentle attitude of simplicity towards his fellow men.

It was many years later, in 1931, that we visited outside of Calcutta, at Belur, the marble temple which was dedicated to this same man by the thousands of his devoted followers. When I offered the garland of jasmin to be laid on the altar, I recalled, with emotion, that the only time I had seen this holy man, he had revealed to me more of the true spirit of India, without even uttering a word, than I had ever sensed in the many lectures *on* India, or *by* Indians, which I had attended since.

Even the skeptics were drawn to Swamiji, liking him despite themselves. One amusing example of this is told in Albert Spalding's autobiography, "Rise and Follow." The following passage relates to the violinist's childhood when his family lived in an apartment house at Central Park South and Seventh Avenue. Although this incident very likely took place at a later date than April, 1894, I believe it can be told here, for it is an example of Swamiji's universal appeal:

Once an Indian swami came to dinner. He was none other than the renowned Vivekananda. Aunt Sally found him fascinating, though she could never quite see the exalted spirituality that his fleet of admirers claimed for him. For the paeans of praise that filled the air she had pithy rejoinders. "Land-a-mercy," she would retort to some

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assertion of the swami's rigidly ascetic life, "ascetic life, indeed! Let me tell you that that man, Indian or no Indian, priest or no priest, that man never got such a generous figure living on wildflowers!"

"But, Aunt Sally, you know you liked him. You showed you did."

"Certainly, I liked him. I like lots of men, and I don't have to think they're Jesus of Nazareth just because I do." She would hold her breath with a kind of smothered chuckle when she felt she had been on the brink of blasphemy.

The evening parties were almost always musical ones. Even the swami did not escape, although my mother had qualms and did not let the music go on too long.

IV

On April 25 and again on May 4 Swamiji wrote from New York to his good friend, Professor John Henry Wright, whom he had recently seen in Boston. The following letters, which have been made available to us through the kindness of Professor Wright's son, Mr. John K. Wright, are of great help in straightening out Swamiji's itinerary at this period of his life, our previous knowledge of which has been sketchy and confused:

25th April '94

Dear professor

I am very very grateful for your invitation. And will come on May 7th As for the bed—my friend, your love and noble heart can convert the stone into down.

I am sorry I am not going to the authors' breakfast at Salem

I am coming home by May 7th

Yours truly
Vivekananda

Before presenting Swamiji's second letter to Professor Wright, I should perhaps remind the Western reader that the term "Adhyapakji" means "Respected Professor."

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New York
4th May 1894

Dear Adhyapakji

I have received your kind note just now. And it is unnecessary for me to say that I will be very happy to do as you say.

I have also received Col. Higginson's letter—I will reply to him.

I will be in Boston on Sunday [May 6]. On Monday I lecture at the Women's Club of Mrs. Howe.

Yours ever truly
Vivekananda

Colonel Higginson, of whom we will hear more later, had been a delegate to the Parliament of Religions and was one of the more liberal-minded writers of the age. He was interested in the Free Religious Association, the motivating idea of which was contained in his paper, "The Sympathy of Religions," which he had read at the Parliament and which had created a furor in Boston. As we shall learn further on, Swamiji was invited to speak at a meeting of the Free Religious Association held in August, 1894, at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The reader will have gathered from the above letter that Swamiji arrived in Boston on Sunday, May 6, and, at the invitation of Mrs. Howe, lectured before a women's club on Monday, May 7.

There can be little doubt that this Mrs. Howe was the famous Julia Ward Howe who many years earlier had written, in a moment of fire, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and who was otherwise known as an upholder of innumerable causes, such as peace, universal suffrage, Russian freedom, the higher education of women, and so on. Both Mrs. Howe and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson were among the last of those Bostonians who represented the golden age of New England culture, which had reached its height before the Civil War. By the 1890's an age of nostalgia had set in; Boston looked, on the one hand, back to its lost glory and, on the other hand, ahead to it knew not what. It was an age of radically changing values, in which all that had been strong, exuberant and idealistic seemed to be dying, with nothing worth while to take its place. There remained, however, a few sturdy souls who upheld the old literary and scholastic traditions, who were, indeed, oblivious of the growing commercialism

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and utilitarianism that had invaded the "American Athens." "These magnanimous worthies," writes Van Wyck Brooks, an authority on New England culture, "these generous natures, for whom nothing had ever existed that was common or mean, were destined to see mankind as forever triumphant. They ignored the signs of the times and lived above them, as Emerson had lived all his life." Mrs. Howe, one of these worthies, was seventy-five in 1894 and is described by Brooks as Swamiji must have seen her: "The great-grandmotherly Mrs. Howe, never at a loss for causes, appeared in her lace hood at every meeting. No meeting could have deserved the name unless she recited the 'Battle Hymn,' in her flowered silk cloak and lilac satin. She was never too old to appear at the State House to plead for justice or mercy, —no day without its cause was her constant motto. . . . As a national institution, Dr. Hale [Edward Everett] was her only rival."

How well Swamiji and these sturdy, old-time Bostonians must have got on together! The spirit of Transcendentalism was still alive in their hearts, and in Swamiji they must have found the past suddenly bursting forth with a voice powerful enough to carry their ideals and causes into the future. There was nothing bigoted, nothing small, in these old-time New Englanders.

The day following Swamiji's lecture before Mrs. Howe's Women's Club, of which we unfortunately have no report, he spoke to the younger generation of Bostonians at Radcliffe, a recently founded college for women, associated with Harvard University and familiarly known as the "Harvard Annex," or just simply the "Annex." Earlier in this story of Swamiji's life in America we quoted extensively from the letters and papers of Mrs. John Henry Wright. Now, with the aid of her journal, we are able to learn something of his activities that have hitherto been unknown and to feel something of the impact of his personality upon those with whom he came in contact. As will be seen from the following excerpts, which Mrs. Wright's son, Mr. John K. Wright, has made available to us, her journal was written for the most part as though she were giving a day-by-day narrative of a mythical family called the "Kirtlands."

(At the time of Swamiji's visit to Boston the Wrights were evidently preparing to move from their home in Cambridge to Annisquam, where they usually spent their summers).

May 7, 1894.

Mr. Kirtland [Dr. Wright] had invited an Oriental to

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spend the next week with them, Swami Vivekananda; but the Swami elected to stay at a hotel in Boston. It was quite a relief for Mrs. Kirtland although she liked the Oriental; but the packing was more than she could manage with a Heathen God always at hand, at least she feared so. He had been with them in the previous summer.

Saturday, May 12, 1894.

On Tuesday [May 8] Vivekananda spoke before the Annex upon his religion. It was most poetic, full of reverence and that deep feeling that for the moment makes converts. The trivial faces of some of the women hardened into a fixed attention and they seemed to be straining every nerve in order to follow the speaker; but when he began to tell us our faults and show up our follies and crimes he came down to a lower level and they laughed with the vexed laugh born of a sting.

The widows of high caste in India do not marry, he said; only the widows of low caste may marry, may eat, drink, dance, have as many husbands as they choose, divorce them all, in short enjoy all the benefits of the highest society in this country. Then we laughed. . . .

Thursday [May 10] Vivekananda spoke at the Round Table at Mr. Collidge's in Boston. He again amused himself by making flings at the Americans. Witty, bitter, sharp flings that were all deserved, all neatly done, all to the point but the man has it in him to do higher things. He looked very picturesque in his yellow turban and scarlet robe, and he spoke with a good deal of dignity. Reproached the country for its plutocracy, its bad morals, its lack of religion.

"When *we* are fanatical," he said, "we torture ourselves, we throw ourselves under huge cars, we cut our throats, we lie on spiked beds; but when *you* are fanatical you cut other people's throats, you torture them by fire and put *them* on spiked beds! You take very good care of your own skins!"

It is obvious that Mrs. Wright appreciated Swamiji, indeed was deeply impressed by him, recognizing him as a man of great stature; yet it appears that she was also somewhat repelled by that side of

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him which could never make itself "sweet and accommodating to every black falsehood." Like a fierce and cleansing wind, Swamiji tore into and uprooted all that was dead and obstructive in the forests of human life, at the same time scattering the seeds of a new and vigorous growth. He was well able to take on the responsibility of telling people the unsavory facts about themselves, for never did he do so without simultaneously revealing a deeper truth. Such was his compassion and his power for good that his audience rarely remarked upon his "witty, bitter, sharp flings." We owe this picture largely to Mrs. Wright —the picture of Swamiji lecturing to rows of "trivial faces" and neatly turning them, as it were, inside out, exposing the absurdities and contradictions of their lives and thought.

This process, of course, did not delight everyone. It is told in "The Life" that in Boston Swamiji once spoke "before a large audience gathered to hear him lecture on 'My Master.'" "Full of the fire of renunciation," the passage reads, ". . . when he saw before him the audience composed, for the most part, of worldly-minded men and women lacking in spiritual sympathy and earnestness, he felt that it would be a desecration to speak to them of his understanding of, and his real feelings of devotion for Sri Ramakrishna. So, instead, he launched out in a terrible denunciation of the vulgar, physical and materialistic ideas which underlay the whole of Western civilization. Hundreds of people left the hall abruptly, but in no way affected, he went on to the end. The next morning the papers were filled with varying criticism, some highly favourable, others severely critical in their analysis of what he had said, but all commenting on his fearlessness, sincerity and frankness."

Unfortunately, a search of the Boston papers has, so far, not yielded reports of Swamiji's tongue-lashing of his Boston audience. It is fairly certain, however, that this lecture does not belong to the period with which we are concerned at present; for according to Swamiji's letter of May 1, 1894, to Isabelle McKindley, he gave, in all, six lectures at Harvard and Boston during the first part of May, all of which are accounted for.

As has been seen, Swamiji's first lecture fell on May 7 before the "Women's Club of Mrs. Howe," the second on May 8 at Radcliffe College, and the third on May 10 at "Mr. Collidge's Round Table" in Boston. Although in an article, which has already been quoted, the *Boston Evening Transcript* of April 5 heralded Swamiji's coming with great excitement, it was remiss, as were the other Boston papers,

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in reporting on these first three lectures. On May 12, however, the *Transcript* ran the following announcements:

LECTURE NOTICES

Mr. Suami Vive Kananda will give a lecture, "The Manners and Customs of India" at Association Hall, on Monday afternoon, in aid of the Tyler-Street Day Nursery.

Mr. Swami Vivekananda will give a lecture, "The Religions of India" in Association Hall, next Wednesday afternoon for the benefit of Ward 16 Day Nursery. Among the matters explained will be the distinction between image worship and idolatry, the various Indian conceptions of the Deity and the teachings of the ancient Hindoo philosophers.

It was characteristic of Swamiji that, although his primary aim at this period of his life was still to collect funds for India, he could not say no to those who asked him to contribute his earnings to various American charities. The lecture of May 14, given for the benefit of the Tyler-Street Day Nursery and entitled "The Manners and Customs of India," was reported upon by both the *Boston Evening Transcript* and the *Boston Herald* of May 15. The reports are so similar that it will be sufficient to reproduce only that of the *Herald*, which reads as follows:

THE RELIGION OF INDIA

It is Described by Swami Vivekananda,
The Brahmin Monk.

Association Hall was crowded with ladies yesterday, to hear Swami Vivekananda, the Brahmin Monk, talk about "The Religion of India" [actually "The Manners and Customs of India"], for the benefit of the ward 16 day nursery [actually, Tyler-Street Day Nursery]. The Brahmin monk has become a fad in Boston, as he was in Chicago last year, and his earnest, honest, cultured manner has won many friends for him.

The Hindoo nation is not given to marriage, he said, not because we are women haters, but because our religion

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teaches us to worship women. The Hindoo is taught to see in every woman his mother, and no man wants to marry his mother. God is mother to us. We don't care anything about God in heaven; it is mother to us. We consider marriage a low vulgar state, and if a man does marry, it is because he needs a helpmate for religion.

You say we ill-treat our women. What nation in the world has not ill-treated its women? In Europe or America a man can marry a woman for money, and, after capturing her dollars, can kick her out. In India, on the contrary, when a woman marries for money, her children are considered slaves, according to our teaching, and when a rich man marries, his money passes into the hands of his wife, so that he would be scarcely likely to turn the keeper of his money out of doors.

You say we are heathens, we are uneducated, uncultivated, but we laugh in our sleeves at your want of refinement in telling us such things. With us, quality and birth make caste, not money. No amount of money can do anything for you in India. In caste the poorest is as good as the richest, and that is one of the most beautiful things about it.

Money has made warfare in the world, and caused Christians to trample on each other's necks. Jealousy, hatred and avariciousness are born of money-getters. Here it is all work, hustle and bustle. Caste saves a man from all this. It makes it possible for a man to live with less money, and it brings work to all. The man of caste has time to think of his soul, and that is what we want in the society of India.

The Brahmin is born to worship God, and the higher his caste, the greater his social restrictions are. Caste has kept us alive as a nation, and while it has many defects, it has many more advantages.

Mr. Vivekananda described the universities and colleges of India, both ancient and modern, notably the one at Benares, that has 20,000 students and professors.

When you judge my religion, he continued, you take it that yours is perfect and mine wrong; and when you criticise the society of India you suppose it to be uncultured just so far as it does not conform to your standard. That is nonsense.

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In reference to the matter of education, the speaker said that the educated men of India become professors, while the less educated become priests.

According to the *Boston Evening Transcript* of May 15, the hour for Swamiji's next lecture, that of May 16, was "fixed late—from 3:30 till 5:30—so that business men may attend." A report of this lecture, "The Religions of India," appeared in the *Boston Herald* of May 17, as follows:

BY THE BRAHMIN MONK

Lecture in Aid of the Ward 16 Day Nursery
Delivered Yesterday Afternoon.

The Brahmin monk, Swami Vivekananda, lectured yesterday afternoon in Association Hall on "The Religions of India," in aid of the Ward 16 Day Nursery. There was a large attendance.

The speaker first gave an account of the Mahommedans, who formed, he said, one-fifth of the population. They believed in both Old and New Testaments, but Jesus Christ they regarded only as a prophet. They had no church organization, though there was reading of the Koran.

The Parsees, another race, called their sacred book the Zend-Avesta, and believed in two warring deities, Armuzd the good and Ahriman the evil. They believed that finally the good would triumph over the evil. Their moral code was summed up in the words: "Good thought, good words, good deeds."

The Hindus proper looked up to the Vedas as their religious scripture. They held each individual to the customs of caste, but gave him full liberty to think for himself in religious matters. A part of their method was to seek out some holy man or prophet in order to take advantage of the spiritual current that flowed through him.

The Hindus had three different schools of religion—the dualistic, the qualified monistic and the monistic—and these three were regarded as stages through which each individual naturally passed in the course of his religious development.

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All three believed in God, but the dualistic school believed that God and man were separate entities, while the monistic declared that there was only one existence in the universe, this unitary existence being neither God nor soul, but something beyond.

The lecturer quoted from the Vedas to show the character of the Hindu religion, and declared that, to find God, one must search one's own heart.

Religion did not consist of pamphlets or books; it consisted of looking into the human heart, and finding there the truths of God and immortality. "Whomsoever I like," said the Vedas, "him I create a prophet," and to be a prophet was all there was of religion.

The speaker brought his lecture to a close by giving an account of the Jains, who show remarkable kindness to dumb animals, and whose moral law is summed up in the words: "Not to injure others is the highest good."

On May 16 Swamiji gave two lectures; the first, as has been seen, at three-thirty in the afternoon, and the second at eight in the evening at Harvard University. The following announcement for the latter appeared in the Harvard University Calendar for May 11, and also in the *Harvard Crimson* of the same date:

ADDRESS BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

On the evening of Wednesday, May 16, at 8 o'clock, in Sever 11, an address will be given under the auspices of the Harvard Union by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, a Hindoo monk. The public are invited. Vivekananda is an adherent of the ancient Brahmin faith of India, and was for eight years the disciple of the sage Ram Krishna. He is well qualified, both by his attainments in native learning and by unusual gifts of eloquence, to expound to a western audience the beliefs of his countrymen. His addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions have attracted great attention.

On May 17 the *Harvard Crimson* ran a brief review of Swamiji's lecture as follows:

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THE EASTERN TOUR—I

VIVEKANANDA'S ADDRESS

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, gave an address last evening in Sever Hall under the auspices of the Harvard Religious Union. The address was very interesting, the clear and eloquent voice of the speaker, and his low, earnest delivery making his words singularly impressive.

There are various sects and doctrines in India, said Vivekananda, some of which accept the theory of a personal God, and others which believe that God and the universe are one; but whatever sect the Hindoo belongs to he does not say that his is the only right belief, and that all others must be wrong. He believes that there are many ways of coming to God; that a man who is truly religious rises above the petty quarrels of sects or creed. In India if a man believes that he is a spirit, a soul, and not a body, then he is said to have religion and not till then.

To become a monk in India it is necessary to lose all thought of the body; to look upon other human beings as souls. So monks can never marry. Two vows are taken when a man becomes a monk, poverty and chastity. He is not allowed to receive or possess any money whatever. The first ceremony to be performed on joining the order is to be burnt in effigy, which is supposed to destroy once for all the old body, name and caste. The man then receives a new name, and is allowed to go forth and preach or travel, but must take no money for what he does.

As in New York, so in Boston, Swamiji no doubt made many new friends as well as renewed the friendships of those whom he had met earlier. Notable among these may have been Mrs. Ole Bull of Cambridge, who was to remain devoted to him for the rest of her life. We do not know exactly when or where Swamiji first met Mrs. Bull. If in Boston, then it may have been during his visit there in April, or, more probably, during that of May. Swamiji did not visit Boston again until September, 1894. But in a letter written to Isabelle McKindley on August 20, he describes Mrs. Bull's "fine big parlour" in her Cambridge home, indicating that he must have been a guest there in May or earlier. We have at present no other indication that he first met Mrs. Bull outside of Boston or Cambridge, and thus, at

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the present time, we have to remain satisfied with the above speculation.

According to Swamiji's letter of May 1 to Isabelle McKindley, in which he had said: "I will on my way to Chicago come to New York once more—give them a few hard raps and pocket the boodle and fly to Chicago," he returned to New York after having completed his lectures in Boston. Unfortunately, we have at present no record of those "hard raps" which he delivered in New York toward the end of May; nor do we know much of his subsequent visit to Chicago, although to judge from his letters, both published and heretofore unpublished, he remained at the Hales' throughout June.

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CHAPTER TEN

TRIALS AND TRIUMPH

I

Some of the letters that Swamiji wrote during the month of June were, as usual, addressed to India. Ever since his arrival in America, through the busiest of his days he had found time to write of his plans for the rejuvenation of his motherland. Halfway across the world he had conveyed to his disciples the tremendously energizing power of his own spirit and enthusiasm, sometimes rebuking them scathingly, sometimes praising them, and always exhorting them to do the work which was so dear to his heart and of which he never lost sight—that of lifting the Indian masses through education. In June of 1894 he continued to write such letters, but now a new note entered them.

As has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, almost a year had passed and Swamiji "could not," as he said, "succeed at all" in his plan for raising funds for his Indian work. Although in 1894 America was in the throes of a depression, this was not the primary cause of his lack of financial success. The rich were still rich and would have been able to contribute the relatively small amount of money that he was attempting to raise. The difficulty lay not in America's "poverty," but in the fact that ever since the opening of the Parliament of Religions Swamiji's enemies, both Christians and Hindus, had been waging a continuous campaign in an attempt to discredit his character and his work in the eyes of the American people. Coupled with this, the Hindu communities in India had uttered not a word of official support and, by their silence, had unwittingly confirmed the slander, published and whispered, of his enemies. By June the situation had become, to say the least, difficult. Beset on all sides and in fear lest even his American friends should lose faith in him, Swamiji wrote again and again to his disciples and friends in India, beseeching them to stir the Hindu communities into organized action. He well knew that India's lack of public support was due, not to an unwillingness on the part of the Hindus to recognize him formally as a true representative of Hinduism, but rather to a characteristic apathy.

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Swamiji had been informed that when the news of his triumph at the Parliament of Religions had reached India the country had been thrown into an uproar of jubilation. He had also received, as he wrote to Isabelle McKindley on April 26, "a little pamphlet published in Calcutta," containing extracts from the local papers, the strain of which was "so fulsome" that he refused to send the pamphlet to her. Again, on May 2, he told Miss McKindley that he had the day before received "a little bit of a newspaper cutting from India." But articles and editorials from Indian papers did not constitute an official approval of Swamiji and his work. For one thing, they did not necessarily represent the concerted opinion of the Hindu communities, nor, for another, were they published in American papers for all to read. If, in view of the statements of his enemies, Swamiji was to be established in the West as an authoritative exponent of Hinduism, an official sanction from the heads of the various Hindu communities, particularly that of Calcutta, was essential. But, after centuries of subjugation under foreign rule, such was the inertia of the Hindus that, jubilant as they were, it did not occur to them to take united and official action to acknowledge publicly the champion of their country and to thank the American people for their reception of him. Even in these practical matters it was necessary for Swamiji to be their guide and director.

To a Madrasi disciple he wrote on June 29: "Now as to my prospects here—it is well nigh zero. Why, because although I had the best purpose it has been made null and void by these causes. All that I get about India is from Madras letters. Your letters say again and again how I am being praised in India. But that is between you and me, for I never saw a single Indian paper writing about me, except the three square inches sent to me by Alasinga. On the other hand everything that is said by Christians in India is sedulously gathered by the missionaries and regularly published and they go from door to door to make my friends give me up. They have succeeded only too well for there is not one word for me from India. Indian Hindu papers may laud me to skies, but not a word of that ever came to America, so that many people in this country think me a fraud. In the face of the missionaries and with the jealousy of the Hindus here to back them I have not a word to say. I now think it was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the strength of the urging of the Madras boys. . . . I came here without credentials. How else to show that I am not a fraud in the face of the missionaries and the Brahmo Samaj?

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Now I thought nothing so easy as to spend a few words; I thought nothing would be so easy as to hold a meeting of some respectable persons in Madras and Calcutta and pass a resolution thanking me and the American people for being kind to me and sending it over officially, i.e., through the Secretary of the function, to America, for instance, sending one to Dr. Barrows and asking him to publish it in the papers and so on, to different papers of Boston, New York and Chicago. Now after all I found that it is too terrible a task for India to undertake. There has not been one voice for me in one year and every one against me, for whatever you may say of me in your homes, who knows anything of it here? More than two months ago I wrote to Alasinga about this. He did not even answer my letter. I am afraid his heart has grown lukewarm. So you must first think of that and then show this letter to the Madras people."

Swamiji also wrote to his friend, the Dewan of Junagad State, Haridas Viharidas Desai: ". . . The backbiters, I must tell you, have not indirectly benefited me, on the other hand, they have injured me immensely in view of the fact that our Hindu people did not move a finger to tell the Americans that I represented them. Had our people sent some words thanking the American people for their kindness to me and stating that I was representing them? On the other hand Mazoomdar, Bombay's Nagarkar, and a Christian woman named Sorabji have been telling the American people that I have donned the Sannyasin's garb only in America and that I was a cheat, pure and simple."

Swamiji's enemies can be grouped under three headings. First, there were the Christian missionaries, whose concerted attacks have been dealt with in previous chapters. Second, there were the Theosophists, who, like the missionaries, were organized in both America and India and among whom were a few of Swamiji's own countrymen. Although the number of Theosophists in America was not large, they nevertheless played an active part in the opposition, joining forces with the missionaries and attempting to thwart Swamiji at every turn. While he was in the West, Swamiji said nothing of the harm the Theosophists were attempting to do his cause, but during one of his first lectures given after his return to India, "My Plan of Campaign," he exposed their malicious activities.

During the course of this lecture Swamiji also told of another of his enemies, "the leader of a reform party in India." "This gentleman," Swamiji said, "I knew from my childhood; he was one of my best

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friends; when I saw him—I had not met for a long time one of my countrymen—I was so glad, and this was the treatment I received from him. The day the Parliament cheered me, the day I became popular in Chicago, from that day his tone changed, and in an underhanded way, he tried to do everything he could to injure me."

The gentleman in question was Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was the third group inimical to Swamiji and which was composed entirely of his own countrymen. Mr. Mazoomdar was, perhaps, Swamiji's worst single enemy. Compelled by a kind of malignant jealousy, he attempted by every means to destroy Swamiji's reputation and influence. Being at the head of the New Dispensation Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta and the editor of *Unity and the Minister,* he was in a position of some authority in India. He also had attracted favorable attention in America, where, ten years prior to the Parliament of Religions, he had lectured with great success. He was, moreover, well known in the West for his book, "The Oriental Christ." Indeed, by preaching a kind of oriental-flavored Christianity, he had attained a reputation in America as a great spiritual light, and in this reputation he had basked.

At the Parliament of Religions, Mazoomdar, representing the Brahmo Samaj, had been well received. As was told in an earlier chapter, one of his talks had so inspired the vast audience at the Hall of Columbus that it had risen in a body and burst forth with the hymn, "Nearer My God to Thee." But it was Swamiji who had carried the day. During the Parliament Mazoomdar's star had perceptibly faded, for America had seen a true Hindu and, as Prince Wolskonsky commented later, "a man." "As it pleased the Lord," Swamiji wrote later to Swami Ramakrishnananda, "I met here Mr. Mazoomdar. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then the fire began to burn in Mr. Mazoomdar's heart. Brother, I was astounded to see and hear these things. . . . Mazoomdar slandered me to the missionaries in the Parliament of Religions, saying that I was a nobody, a thug and a cheat, and he accused me of coming here and pretending to be a monk. Thus he greatly succeeded in prejudicing their minds against me. He so prejudiced President Barrows that he didn't even speak to me decently. In their books and pamphlets they tried their best to snub me, but the Guru is my help. What could Mazoomdar say?"

Shortly after the Parliament Mr. Mazoomdar returned to India, and there he attempted to discredit Swamiji with every weapon at his

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command. Swamiji received news of this sometime in March of 1894 in a letter from his "brethren at Calcutta." "The letter says," he wrote to Mary Hale on March 18, 1894, (I quote from the complete version) "that Mazoomdar has gone back to Calcutta and is preaching that Vivekananda is committing every sin under the sun in America—especially *'unchastity'* of the most degraded type!!! Lord bless his soul —You need not be sorry—I am too well known in my native land as to my character and my brethren my life-long companions know me too well to believe such trash—They only laugh at Mazoomdar's attempts as very clumsy. This is your America's *wonderful spiritual* man!! It is not their fault—until one is really spiritual, that is, until one has got a real insight into the nature of his own soul, and has got a glimpse of the world of soul, he cannot recognize chaff from seed, tall talk from depth and so on. . . . I am sorry for poor Mazoomdar that he should stoop so low!! He says that I am leading a bestially unchaste life with American women!! Lord bless the old boy—women of America know better of me I hope."

The women of America, those, at least, who were well acquainted with Swamiji, certainly knew better of him. They were his most staunch and loyal supporters, rising to his defense, as did Mrs. Bagley, to thoroughly squelch the scandalmongers. These last, giving ear to Mazoomdar and the Christian missionaries, busily and anonymously "warned" Swamiji's friends against him; and while such tactics undoubtedly influenced many who did not know him well, they had no effect whatsoever on his friends. Mr. Hale, for instance, once received an anonymous and scandal-filled letter warning him not to allow his daughters and nieces to associate with the Hindu monk. On reading this bit of advice, Mr. Hale dropped the letter into the flames of his hearth, as one might drop into the fire a vermin-ridden piece of trash.

But although none who knew Swamiji well could for a moment have doubted his veracity and honor, for, as he himself said, "What I am is written on my brow," he—from whose face the light of truth itself shone—lived for months in the fear that even the best of his friends would turn from him, or—what was worse—would consider themselves to have been cheated and their hospitality abused. Aside from this fear, tales of his alleged fraudulence and unchastity, originating as they did from one of his own countrymen, must have made him sick at heart. He, the purest of men, accused of immorality! The heartbreak such sordid rumors might inflict on those who loved

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him worried him above all. As he wrote to Isabelle McKindley on April 26: "Now I do not care what they even of my own people say about me—except for one thing. I have an old mother. She has suffered much all her life and in the midst of all she could bear to give me up for the service of God and man—but to have given up the most beloved of her children—her hope—to live a beastly immoral life in a far distant country—as Mazoomdar was telling in Calcutta would have simply killed her."

Mazoomdar's treachery undoubtedly offended and incensed Swamiji's brother-monks who wrote to him of it. But to them, so far distant, Swamiji did not confide his own pain, rather he consoled and fortified them. To Swami Brahmananda he wrote: "I am very sorry to hear of Mazoomdar's doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push himself before all others. I am not much to blame. Mazoomdar came here ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is childishness on Mazoomdar's part to be annoyed at this. Never mind. Great men like you should pay no heed to what he says. Shall we, children of Sri Ramakrishna and nourished with his heart's blood, be afraid of worm-bites? 'The wicked criticise the conduct of the magnanimous, which is extraordinary and whose motives are difficult to fathom.' Remember this and forgive this fool."

It was not as though Mazoomdar was not well aquainted with Swamiji's true character and background. Not only had he known him for many years, but he had also known his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, had sat at his feet and, some fifteen years before the Parliament of Religions, had written and published an article in most eloquent and convincing praise of that great saint. "My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes," were Mazoomdar's words. ". . . A living evidence of the depth and sweetness of Hindu religion is this good and holy man. He has wholly controlled his flesh. It is full of soul, full of the reality of religion, full of joy, full of blessed purity. . . . His spotless holiness, his deep unspeakable blessedness, his unstudied, endless wisdom, his childlike peacefulness and affection towards all men, his consuming, all-absorbing love for God are his only reward. . . . Our own ideal of religious life is different, but so long as he is spared to us, gladly shall we sit at his feet to learn from him the sublime precepts of purity, unworldliness, spirituality and inebriation in the love of God."

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Mazoomdar's article was to rebound against him when, after the Parliament of Religions, he set about maligning Swamiji, whom he well knew to be the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The story goes that at an evening gathering in America, where Mazoomdar had been speaking disparagingly of Swamiji and his Master, one of the guests handed him his article and asked: "Did you not write this?" What Mazoomdar said in reply is not recorded. There was, after all, little that he could say.

It may well have been Mazoomdar's article that Swamiji had distributed in pamphlet form at the Parliament (see Chapter Two), for it was the best current appraisal of his Master. But however that may be, it was certainly this article to which Swamiji referred when, on June 29, he wrote to a disciple in India, "By the by, will you kindly send up a few copies of the sketch of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life written by Mazoomdar to Chicago? They have lots in Calcutta." No doubt Swamiji wanted to circulate the sketch among those of his friends who desired to know more of Sri Ramakrishna. But he was also, perhaps, not unmindful of the fact that the sketch was the best possible answer to Mazoomdar's vilification.

One of his attacks, accusing Swamiji of being a sort of Bohemian who preached a pseudo-Hinduism, was published in *Unity and the Minister* and was subsequently quoted by everyone who, for one reason or another, wished to harm his reputation. The paragraph that embodied this accusation first reached America via the *Boston Daily Advertiser* of May 16, 1894, in the following article:

A PROPHET FROM INDIA

Not long ago Buddhism was a subject of interest and study in the vicinity of Boston. But, just as in India about a thousand years ago, Buddhism was supplanted by Hinduism proper, so now in Boston Hinduism seems to be supplanting Buddhism in popular interest. This is partly due to the presence and addresses of the Hindu monk VIVEKANANDA, who attracted much attention at the parliament of religions.

As evidence of his standing in India he presents a letter from the professor of chemistry in Pacheappa's College, Madras. India is so remote that naturally it would be known to but few here that Pacheappa's College is the centre of the anti-Christian spirit in India, and that the publications

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of BRADLAUGH and INGERSOLL are the kind of material from which members of that institution have largely drawn both their conceptions of Christianity and their attacks on it. But though offering such evidence of his Indian standing, VIVEKANANDA has in this country, we believe, openly expressed his dissent from that extreme kind of anti-Christian materialism.

When the published reports of the attentions paid to VIVEKANANDA at the parliament of religions reached India the newspapers of that country naturally commented upon them and upon the substance of his addresses. Among such comments in the press of India we have noticed the following: The Christian Patriot, the leading Christian paper of southern India, edited by Indian Christians, one of them being a graduate of Cambridge University in England, in its issue of Dec. 7, 1893, said:—

Although the young Hindu ascetic who appeared at Chicago with the assumed names VIVEKHANANDA SAWMY, is described by the American papers as a Brahman, and although this wrong view has been endorsed by our contemporary the Bengalee, we happen to know to a certainty that VIVEKHANANDA is not a Brahman. He is none other than Babu (i.e. Mr.) NORENDRA NATH DUTT, son of the late Babu TARAH NATH DUTT of Simla, Ind., who was a pleader of the high court. Babu NORENDRA NATH DUTT was an intelligent graduate of the Calcutta University and it was very recently that he took to ascetic life.

The Indian Evangelical Review at Calcutta, in its April issue, remarked:—

Until we had heard from Chicago we were not aware that we had such a genius among us in Calcutta as it now seems we have. It only proves the truth of the words of JESUS: "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." More than this, evidence of the truth of Christianity we have in our Swami. What he taught as Hinduism and what gave power and influence to his words was the large admixture of Christian truth which he taught and which he received as a student in one of the Christian missionary colleges of Calcutta, and truth too which is the

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very opposite of the error which is the foundation stone of the Hinduism which he professed to teach, viz: (1) the brotherhood of man, and (2) the Lordship of God over the conscience. The caste system of Hinduism antagonizes both, and persecutes, as far as the Christian government permits, any who chooses to act under the influence of either. A man who chooses to eat with a brother man, or to obey his enlightened conscience in the matter of religious duty, and is baptized, will by Hinduism all over India be persecuted by the death of his soul and body; and yet this baboo goes across seas and continents to tell the parliament of religions that Hindus do not persecute and that Hindus love all men as brethren."

The following is from Unity and the Minister, published at Calcutta which is the official organ of that branch of the Brahmo Somaj of which Mr. Moozoomdar is the leading member.

"The Indian Mirror has published several long leaders in praise of the Neo-Hindu Babu NORENDRA NATH DUTT alias VIVEKHANANDA in some of its late issues. We have no objection to the publication of such panegyrics on the Sanyasi (monk), but since the time he came to us to act on the stage of the Nava-vrindavan Theater or sang hymns in one of the Brahmo Samajes of this city we knew him so well that no amount of newspaper writing could throw any new light on our estimate of his character. We are glad our old friend lately created a good impression in America by his speeches, but we are aware that Neo-Hinduism of which our friend is a representative is not orthodox Hinduism. The last thing which the latter would do is to cross the Kalapani (ocean), partake of the Mlechha food (i.e., food of outcasts, i.e. of Christians and foreigners) and smoke endless cigars and the like. Any follower of modern Hinduism cannot command that respect from us which we entertain for a genuine orthodox Hindu. Our contemporary may try to do his best to promote the reputation of VIVEKHANANDA, but we cannot have patience with him when he publishes glaring nonsense."

All of which goes to show several things, among others, that human nature in India is a good deal like human nature

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in other quarters of the globe. Hinduism is a multi-meaning term, and remembering how wide apart may be two representations of the Christian religion, both equally sincere, we need not wonder that Hinduism as VIVEKHANANDA understands it is a quite different thing from Hinduism as Moozoomdar understands it. This is not the first evidence which has reached us that some of the most impressive statements of Oriental beliefs, and the most rapturously applauded, made at the parliament of religions in Chicago last summer, were very far from being such as the "orthodox" adherents of those beliefs on native soil would accept; or that the ideas expressed in many instances by visiting Hindus and other Orientals that seemed to compare so favorably with Christianity were really, though perhaps unconsciously, absorbed from Christian missions and schools.

Coupled with everything that the Christians had thrown at Swamiji, this article, which was also published word for word in the *Detroit Free Press* letter column of June 11, did nothing to allay the growing suspicion in America that perhaps he was, after all, a "fraud." Among other things, Mr. Mazoomdar forgot to mention in his paragraph regarding Swamiji in *Unity and the Minister* that if "Norendra Nath Dutt alias Vivekhananda" had acted on the stage of the Navavrindavan Theater he had done so in good company. Keshab Chandra Sen had also taken a part in the same play, which, as it happens, was a religious drama enacted by the intimate members of the Brahmo Samaj, of which Keshab was the head. It is doubtful that Swamiji's enemies, who took delight in quoting from *Unity and the Minister*, knew these facts which completely altered the significance of Mazoomdar's reference to Swamiji. Some Americans, however, who were better informed, kept level heads, a fact attested to by the following anonymous letter, which appeared in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* of May 17:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vivekananda.

To the Editor of The Advertiser: The quotations that appeared in your paper about Swami Vivekhananda may

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mislead the public in some points, especially those who do not care to read between the lines.

The passages quoted from Indian papers are all "Christian," with the exception of the last, which is edited by Mr. Moozoomdar, who represented the "Brahmo Samaj" and not "Hinduism" in any of its "phases" and "sects."

Moreover these quotations are attacks made on "Hindu" papers, especially the "Indian Mirror" and the "Bengalee," for their praising Vivekhananda and fully indorsing his views. I have at hand from Calcutta some of those "Hindu" papers and I send two quotations from two of the leading ones, namely, the "Indian Mirror," which is assuredly the leading Indian paper edited by a Hindu, and another Calcutta paper, "Amrita Bazar Fabriku [Patrika]," which has the greatest political influence of any in India and also edited by a Hindu.

"We were anxious for a man who would be competent to enlighten the parliament on the subject of Hinduism as might not only justify it in the eyes of the civilized world, but also win for it the respect of the spiritually minded of all systems of faith. But when reliable reports reached us of Swami Vivekhananda we felt thankful to the great disposer of all events that he in his inscrutable ways had found the right man in the right place. It is a matter of national congratulation that the representative of Hinduism has been equal to his task and he discharged his duties in a manner that has earned for him the gratitude of the entire Hindu community."

"The precepts preached by the illustrious Vivekhananda disciple of the still more illustrious Ram Krishna Taranhansa [Paramahamsa] gave to those who had always heard of the Hindus as devil worshippers a true view of Hinduism."

So it is clear the "Hindus" all acknowledge him. He never pretends to represent "Christianity" or "Brahmo Samaj."

Yours truly,
S.

But although "S" and perhaps a few others who had seen the Hindu papers quickly came to Swamiji's defense, it was the papers inimical to him that were widely quoted in America, not those favorable to him. Some of his own countrymen had, for the time

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being at least, effectively betrayed him, and no others had come officially to his support. "Every moment I expected something from India," Swamiji wrote on June 29. "No, it never came. Last two months especially I was in torture every moment. No, not even a newspaper from India! [Except, as he said in this same letter "the three square inches sent to me by Alasinga."] My friends waited—waited month after month; nothing came, not a voice. Many consequently grew cold and at last gave me up. But it is the punishment for relying upon man and upon brute, for our countrymen are not men yet. They are ready to be praised, but when their turn comes even to say a word, they are nowhere."

II

These were months of anguish to Swamiji, months in which his motherland lifted not a finger to help him but in which, unfaltering, he never gave up his fight for her. I do not believe that his trial in this respect has been fully appreciated. Some hitherto unpublished letters which he wrote to Professor John Henry Wright reveal how deeply disturbed he was by the slander of his enemies and by the ever-present possibility that his friends would consider themselves to have been duped. Aside from giving his word to Professor Wright, Swamiji sent him every available scrap of testimony in an effort to prove himself worthy of the professor's friendship and trust. It is not likely that Dr. Wright doubted Swamiji. But after the appearance of the article in the *Boston Evening Advertiser,* quoted above, Swamiji felt obliged to vindicate himself. The following letter was written from Boston prior to May 24 (on which date, as we see from his next letter to the professor, he was in Chicago):

17 Beacon Street.

Dear Adhyapakji

By this time you have got the pamphlet and the letters. If you like I would send you over from Chicago some letters from Indian Princes and ministers—one of these ministers was one of the Commissioners of the late opium commission—that sat under Royal Commission in India. If you like I will have them write to you to convince you of my not being a cheat. But my brother our ideal of life is to hide to suppress and to deny.

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We are to give up and not to take Had I not the "Fad" in my head I would never have come over here. And it was with a hope that it would help my cause that I joined the parliament of Religions—having always refused it when our people wanted to send me for it. I came over telling them—"that I may or may not join that assembly—and you may send me over if you like" They sent me over leaving me quite free.

You did the rest.

I am morally bound to afford you every satisfaction my kind friend—but for the rest of the world I do not care what they say—the Sanyasi must not have self defense. So I beg of you not to publish or show anybody anything in that pamphlet or the letters. I do not care for the attempts of the old missionary but the fever of jealousy which attacked Mazoomdar gave me a terrible shock and I pray that he would know better—for he is a great and good man who has tried all his life to do good. But this proves one of my master's sayings—"living in a room covered with black soot—however careful you may be—some spots must stick to your clothes."

So—however one may try to be good and holy—so long he is in the world—some part of his nature must gravitate downwards.

The way to God is the opposite to that of the world. And to few very few are given to have God and mammon at the same time.

I was never a *missionary* nor ever would be one—my place is in the Himalayas—I have satisfied myself so far—that I can with a full conscience say "my God—I saw terrible misery amongst my brethren I searched and discovered the way out of it—tried my best to apply the remedy but failed—So thy will be done."

May His blessings be on you and yours for ever and ever

Yours affly
Vivekananda

541 Dearborn Ave Chicago
I go to Chicago tomorrow or day after

Yours
V.

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The pamphlet that Swamiji had sent prior to writing the above was no doubt the same one he had mentioned in his letter of April 26 to Isabelle McKindley as "a little pamphlet published in Calcutta about me—revealing that once at least in my life the prophet has been honored in his own country." But evidently neither pamphlet nor letters altogether satisfied the professor, or, at least, Swamiji felt that they did not, for in a second letter from Chicago he enclosed further testimony regarding his good standing in India. His reference below to "Mr. Mazoomdar's party chief," is, of course, to Keshab Chandra Sen, who had been formerly a leader of the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta. In the following letter we learn for the first time that Swamiji held none too high an opinion of Keshab, despite the fact that Sri Ramakrishna had been deeply fond of him:

541 Dearborn Avenue. Chicago
24th May '94

Dear Adhyapakji.

Herewith I forward to you a letter from one of our ruling princes of Rajputana His Highness the Maharaja of Khetri.

And another from the opium comissiner [sic] late minister of *Junagad* one of the largest states in India and a man who is called the *Gladstone* of India

These I hope would convince you of my being no fraud.

One thing I forgot to tell you I *never* identified myself anyway with Mr. Mazoomdar's party chief. If he says so he does not speak the truth.

I hope after your perusal you will kindly send the letters over to me except the pamphlet which I do not care for.

I am bound my dear friend to give you every satisfaction of my being a genuine *Sanyasi* but to *you* alone. I do not care what the rabbles say or think about me.

"Some would call you a saint some a *chandala* some a lunatic, Others a demon; go on then straight to thy work without heeding either" thus saith one of our great sanyasis—an old emperor of India King Bhartri Hari who joined the order in old times.

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever. My love to all your children and my respects to your noble wife

I remain ever your friend
Vivekananda

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P.S.

I had connection with Pundit Shiva Nath Shastries party—but only on points of social reform. Mazoomdar and Chandra Sen I always considered as not sincere and I have no reason to change my opinion even now. Of course in Religious matters even with my friend Punditji I differed much. The chief being I thinking *Sanyasa* or (giving up the world) the highest ideal and he, a sin. So the Brahmo Samajists consider becoming a monk a sin!!

yours
V.

The Brahmo Samaj like Christian Science in your country spread in Calcutta for a certain time and then died out. I am not sorry neither glad that it died. It has done its work—viz social reform. Its religion was not worth a cent and so it must die out. If Mazoomdar thinks I was one of the causes of its death—he errs I am even now a great sympathiser of its reforms—but the "booby" religion could not hold its own against the old "Vedanta" What shall I do? Is that my fault? Mazoomdar has become childish in his old age and takes to tactics not a whit better than some of your Christian missionaries Lord bless him and show him better ways

Yours
Vivekananda

When are you going to Annisquam? My love to Austin and Bime my respects to your wife and for you my love and gratitude is too deep for expression

Yours ever affectionately
Vivekananda

Among Professor Wright's papers was the letter from the Maharaja of Khetri which Swamiji had sent him. It reads as follows:

Khetri 7-4-94

My dear Guroo

I was very glad to receive your kind letter of 28th Feb. You indirectly accuse me of not writing to your holiness more than once. Of course I must confess it, but, at the same time I should be allowed to say that I was unable to make my letters reach you for some months till you had decided to make a long

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stay at Chicago ; after that I had been travelling almost all the time, visiting Bombay, Dawarika, Virawel, Girnar etc. And afterwards Rampur to join in the rejoicings held there on account of the marriage of the Nawab Sahib. But after all I think I should beg to be apologised [forgiven] for it.

I see, there is no need of advising one who is far more wiser, but still I dare say that you ought not to feel disgusted by the backbiting of our countrymen for you should see "Kraya--vikraya-velayam kacha-kacha mani manih." [At the time of buying and selling, that is, true appraisal, glass is only glass, a jewel is a jewel.] If a man like you would give up your long cherished design for bettering your mother country by getting some help from the noble civilised people of west, who else could ever attempt to fulfil it? Although I would always like to have you with me, for who knows how long one can live, but still I must not be selfish and should ask you to try your best for the poor and wretched condition of our dear India which could once produce men of such capability who did find the "Spirit knowledge" in those days when there were not even the slightest traces of the present inventions such as the steam and electric machines. That age is perhaps considered as "the Dark age" according to the present western theories, who suppose mankind to have been too young in those days.

My eagerness for seeing your holy self urges me to write to you to come back soon, but at the same time something else checks my pen and makes me write something quite contrary to that i.e. to ask you to remain still there where the people are jewellers of human beings.

Swami Akhundanandji is here now-a-days. He has written a separate letter to your holiness enclosed with this. Jug Mohan is at Jeypore but I am sure he will be much pleased when he hears that I have written his *dundavets* [prostrations] to you without his request.

We have at last catched the tiger which had been roaming in our Khetri hills and had devoured about 50 buffaloes here up to till it was nicely secured.

With my hearty dundavets
I am proud of signing
Yours Ajit Simh

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Aside from the above letter, Swamiji also sent to Professor Wright a leading article from the *Indian Mirror* of February 22. Written across the now faded and torn bit of newspaper are the words in Swamiji's hand: "The most influential paper in India." (It was this leader that "S" had paraphrased. See page 403.) Excerpts from the article are given below:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA

When the Executive Committee of the Parliament of Religions, held in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago, issued its invitation to the members of every creed and church in the world to send their representatives to its meetings, we felt an anxiety as to the possibility of finding a man who would be a Hindu of Hindus, and yet would not have scruples to cross the ocean, and must, at the same time, be competent to enlighten the Parliament on the subject of Hinduism as might not only justify it in the eyes of the civilized world, but also win for it the respect and admiration of the spiritual-minded and religiously disposed among the followers of every other system of faith. But when reliable reports reached us of the ability, wisdom and eloquence with which Swami Vivekananda was expounding Hinduism at the Parliament, not only all our anxiety about the matter was at an end, but we felt thankful to the Great Disposer of all events who, it seemed, in his inscrutable ways, had found the right man for the right place. It was a demand of the time and of the age that Hinduism, which has been so cruelly misjudged and imperfectly apprehended by the Christians in particular, and followers of other religions in general, should be represented in its true aspect before all the world. The platform of the Parliament of religions was indeed the fittest place from which Hinduism could be effectively defended against the many false charges, repeatedly brought against it by interested persons and communities, and also from which its merits could be expounded to enable people to accord to it its just position in the ranks of the world's great religions. It is a matter of national congratulation that the representative of Hinduism at the great Parliament was equal to his task, and discharged his duties in a manner that has earned for

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him the gratitude of the entire Hindu community. [Here follows a résumé of Swamiji's talk at the Parliament. The article then continues:]

His fame, as an eloquent preacher of sublime Hindu doctrines, spread fast through the American cities and towns, and we learn that ever since the Parliament dissolved, the Swami has been eagerly sought for by numerous persons, invitations have poured upon him from various places to deliver lectures, and he has been strongly pressed to prolong his stay in America. Mr. A. Wann, an American gentleman of standing, writing under the date the 27th December to a friend in Calcutta, says:—"Mr. Swami Vivekanand has been delivering splendid lectures all over the country. He is very popular here." As might be expected, some American *padres,* [note in Swamiji's hand at foot of column: padre=a missionary—slang] driven to desperation, as they were, by the sudden lift Hinduism was given to by its expositions by the Swami, made an effort to discredit him in the eyes of the American public, an effort in which they were aided, we are sorry to be told, by a member of the Hindu race. But his opponents failed to find a single flaw either in his life or his teachings, and the Swami has steadily risen in the estimation of the people in the United States, and in Canada, till his popularity has grown to such a high pitch that we are told, he is now in a manner idolized.

. . . With the fact before us of this outburst of enthusiasm and admiration for the teachings of Hinduism by hundreds of Americans, shall we not be justified in advancing the opinion that these Christian people have found in the essence of Hinduism a higher and truer ideal of religious life than Christianity could supply them?

Whatever may be the practical outcome of Swami Vivekananda's Mission in America, there can be no question that it has already had the effect of immensely raising the credit of true Hinduism in the eyes of the civilized world, and that is, indeed, a work for which the whole Hindu community should feel grateful to the Swami.

If Professor Wright had ever entertained misgivings about Swamiji's integrity, they were by this time effectively banished,

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Another close friend, however, began to have qualms, or so, at least, Swamiji thought. On June 18 he wrote again to Professor Wright as follows:

541 Dearborn Avenue.
18th June '94

Dear Adhyapakji—

Excuse my delay in sending the other letters—I could not find them earlier—I am going to New York in a week.

I do not know whether I will come to Annisquam or not The letters need not be sent over to me until I write you again. Mrs Bagley seems to be unsettled by that article in the Boston paper against me. She sent me over a copy from Detroit—and has ceased correspondence with me. Lord bless her She has been very kind to me.

Stout hearts like yours are not common my brother. This is a queer place—this world of ours. On the whole—I am very very thankful to the Lord for the amount of kindness I have received at the hands of the people of this country—I a complete stranger here without even "credentials". Every thing works for the best—

Yours ever in gratitude
Vivekananda

P.S. The East India Stamps are for your children if they like.

That Mrs. Bagley, who had been Swamiji's hostess in Detroit, was actually unsettled by the article in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* is difficult to believe. She knew Swamiji well and only a few days after he had written the above letter to Professor Wright was to write one of her adamant letters in his defense—letters which have been quoted in an earlier chapter. To judge from her letter of June 22, she had already invited Swamiji to spend the summer in Annisquam and had by no means rescinded the invitation. Her silence subsequent to sending Swamiji the article in the Boston paper was surely misconstrued by him, but the fact remained that, beleaguered on all sides, he *thought* that Mrs. Bagley had lost faith in him, and this must surely have hurt him deeply.

The month of June, which Swamiji spent in Chicago, was indeed a dark one for him. Even the Hale sisters had left town for a vacation. Yet, in spite of all, on June 26 he wrote to them what is perhaps the

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most beautiful of all his letters. This letter has been published, but the original, which Isabelle McKindley saved along with those addressed to her alone, differs in some respects from the published version. Inasmuch as this letter was undoubtedly written in a mood of spiritual ecstasy, I think the reader might like to see it exactly as Swamiji wrote it. It is, moreover, indispensable to our narrative, for it shows the deeper state of his mind during this period of tribulation. Swamiji wrote:

Chicago
The 26th June 1894

Dear Sisters—

The great Hindi poet Tulsidas in the benediction to his translation of the Ramayan says "I bow down to both the wicked and the holy, but alas for me they are both equally torturers—The wicked begin to torture me as soon as they come in contact with me—the good alas take my life away when they *leave* me" I say amen to this. To me for whom the only pleasure and love left in the world is to love the holy ones of God—it is a mortal torture to separate myself from them.

But these things must come—thou music of my beloved's flute—lead on I am following. It is impossible to express my pain—my anguish—at being separated from you noble and sweet and generous and holy ones. Oh, how I wish—I had succeeded in becoming a stoic. Hope you are enjoying the beautiful village scenery—"Where the world is awake there the man of self-control is sleeping Where the world sleeps—there he is waking" May even the dust of this world never touch you for after all the poets may say—it is only a piece of carrion covered over with garlands. Touch it not if you can. Come up—young ones of the bird of paradise—before your feet touch this cesspool of corruption this world and fly upwards.

"Oh those that are awake do not go to sleep again"—

"Let the world love its many, we have but one beloved—the Lord—We care not what they say—We are only afraid when they want to paint my beloved and give him all sorts of monstrous qualities—let them do what ever they please—for us He is only the beloved—my love my love my love and nothing more."

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"Who cares to know how much power, how much quality he has—even that of doing good—We will say once and for all—we love not for the long purse—we never sell our love—we want not we give."

"You philosopher come to tell us of His essence—His powers—His attributes—fool! We are here dying for a kiss of His lips"

"Take your nonsense back to your own home—and send me a kiss of my love—can you"

"Fool whom thou art bending your tottering knees before in awe and fear—I took my necklace and put it round his neck and tying a string to it as a collar I am dragging him along with me—for fear He may fly even for a moment—that necklace was the collar of love, that string the ecstasy of love—fool! You know not the secret—the *infinite* one comes within my fist under the bondage of love" "Knowest thou not that the Lord of the universe is the bond slave of Love" "Knowest thou not that the mover of the universe used to dance to the music of the ringing bracelets of the shepherdesses of Vrindavan?"

Excuse my mad scribbling

Excuse my foolery in trying to express the inexpressible—It is to be felt only.

Ever with blessings your brother

Vivekananda

Thus, during a period of outward trial and tribulation, Swamiji's inner mind and heart were filled only with spiritual joy and love. Inscrutable indeed are the ways of God and God-men!

III

Although Swamiji was not aware of it, these days were actually favorable ones. Even while he was scolding his Madrasi disciples for not having arranged a public meeting, Alasinga and others were, in fact, obeying him and were organizing the now famous Madras Meeting which was held in June, 1894. Word of this meeting, however, did not reach Swamiji until the end of August, when he read of it in the

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Boston Evening Transcript of August 30. The article that at last brought him this long-awaited news read as follows:

> Swami Vivekananda came to the United States to convert the heathen of this country from the ruling faith in materiality to a lively conviction of spiritual things. The impression he made at the Parliament of Religions and his subsequent missions in various parts of the country are matters well known to all. Like our own missionaries to India, the gentlemen who come as missionaries to us in America are not all of the same tenets and practices, and do not often know all about the good works of one another. But it is interesting to receive just at this moment, when the Hindoo monk has been speaking at Eliot and Plymouth, a circular of the proceedings of the public meeting at Madras, where leading Hindoos assembled together to make formal expression of their gratitude to him for his representing of Hindooism to the American public and at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. The chairman said they were assembled to express their admiration and their thanks to the great American people for the very kindly and sympathetic reception which they had accorded to Paramahamsa Swami Vivekananda, whom all here knew so well and revered so much. They had met also to convey to the Swami their high appreciation of the signal services which he had rendered in America in the Parliament of Religions and in other places. There could be no doubt that his visit to the great Western country and his services there were of excellent augury. He believed that it was a precurser of many such visits and still greater services on his part and on the part of others who had such great capacity as Swami Vivekananda had of rendering national services. He had no doubt that all present were agreed that for a long time to come they must simply be learners and students and endeavor to learn and assimilate what was good and excellent in the civilization of the West. In the formal thanks sent to America are these fervent words:
>
> "Amid all the troubles and humiliations of our past history, in spite of our present fallen condition, we, Hindus, yet retain undiminished our faith in our ancient system of religion, of which the fundamental and central conceptions

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have been placed before you with such conspicuous power and success by our gifted representative. All of us who have the privilege of knowing personally Swami Vivekananda never felt a moment's doubt that his mission to your great and free nation would prove an entire success and that his genius, enthusiasm, wisdom and eloquence will bear fruit. India is still the home of spirituality, as it was the cradle of the world's civilization. Virtue and holiness still continue a power with our people; and, as long as this continues, our ancient conviction that ours is the holy land and ours the chosen race cannot desert us. Our Anglo-Saxon rulers—your near and our distant kinsmen—are fulfilling, with such might and sincerity as is possible, their heaven-sent mission in this land; already the signs of a brighter era of rejuvenated nationality are beginning to dawn upon us; and when all our fetters break asunder as they must with the progress of good government and material prosperity, we hope that our race will yet be able to utilize her national resurrection for the spiritual elevation of the world. It is in this light that the Hindoo community views the great success of Swami Vivekananda's mission to America, and the kindly and enthusiastic reception which your great nation, in its centres of light, might and freedom, has been pleased to accord to our gifted representative and to his exposition of the teachings of our sages and prophets."

On reading the above, Swamiji wrote to Alasinga: "No news reached me of the Madras Meeting until I read of it in the *Boston Evening Transcript*. Sometimes I get depressed and I write to you all kinds of things and hope you will not take them to heart. Remember I am living fifteen thousand miles away, alone, and I have to fight the orthodox, inimical Christians. As a result I get sometimes disturbed." Swamiji's Indian mail, having been, no doubt, forwarded here and there, finally caught up with him, and he duly received the Madras Address itself. In the meantime, however, the only news of what was taking place in India came to him through the American newspapers.

The *Chicago Interocean* of August 31, as well as the *Boston Evening Transcript*, spread the story of his official vindication as follows:

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It is pleasant to note, that this Hindoo teacher is not a prophet without honor in his own country, and that, at a public meeting recently held in Madras, the Hindoo community indorsed all his efforts in America, and sent their thanks to America for the manner in which he was received. The Hindoos of Madras have sent to THE INTEROCEAN a communication expressing their thanks and admiration for 'the gracious hospitality and large-hearted philanthrophy which characterizes your great and powerful community. The generous fervor with which your great people have received and listened to the holy man, who undertook to convey to them the message to mankind of our Hindoo sages and prophets, has proved to us how false and foul are the charges which we have every now and then seen leveled against America, that she is the motherland of unblushing dollar worship, that her sons are absorbed in gross materialism, and that there is no love among them for the things of the spirit.'

The Parliament of Religions has begun to show its fruits far off in India. The people are correcting their impressions of America since they have seen it through eyes in which they have confidence as representing themselves, and India through the reports of Swami Vivekananda, the great Hindoo teacher, will learn to admire the Western world and learn from it many things that will improve her material welfare, as Americans learned of the spiritual beauties of Hindoo philosophy as taught by one of the great Hindoo priests. The World's Congress had for its motto 'Not Things but Men,' but it will show in its fruits many advancements that concern things as well as men, when the seeds sown by the delegates to these great congresses take firm root in the soil of the Orient.

The New York papers, the *Sun* of September 2 and the *Daily Tribune* of September 3, followed suit, taking a delight, it seemed, in Swamiji's triumph, as well as in India's gratitude to the American people.

India had at last become aware of her responsibility to her champion. Following the Madras Meeting, other public meetings were held throughout India, with the utmost jubilation and ceremony.

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The Calcutta Meeting, in which the "enthusiasm reached a pitch of frenzy," perhaps meant the most to Swamiji, for Calcutta was not only his birthplace, where his life and character were well known, but was the seat of Mr. Mazoomdar's opposition. The acclaim of Calcutta vindicated Swamiji as nothing else could, setting upon him and his work the official seal of approval with final and indisputable authority and silencing his enemies once and for all. When the climactic news arrived from Calcutta, Swamiji wrote in the fullness of his joy and gratitude to the Hales. This letter is perhaps the most heart-rending of all Swamiji's letters, revealing as it does how humanly deep his previous sufferings must have been and how childlike and pure his joy at the news of his vindication. Thus, although it has been published in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" and may be familiar to the reader, I feel that it should be included here. (It should be mentioned that in Volume VIII, and also in a copy of the original, this letter has been given the date, July 9, 1894—a date which must be in error; for by July no news of the meetings in India had reached Swamiji. The letter, moreover, obviously refers to the Calcutta Meeting and, therefore, could not have been written earlier than late September. I quote from an unedited version:)

Oh my sisters

Glory unto *Jagadamba* [Mother of the Universe]—I have gained beyond expectations—the prophet has been honored and with a *vengeance*. I am weeping like a child at His mercy—He never leaves his servant, sisters—The letter I send you will explain all—and the printed things are coming to the American people—The names there are the very flower of our country. The president was the chief *nobleman* of Calcutta and the other man Mahesh Chander Nyaya-ratna is the principal of Sanscrit College and the chief Brahman in all India and recognized by the Government as such—The letter will tell you all—Oh! sisters! what a rogue am I that in the face of such mercies sometimes the faith totters—seeing every moment that I am in his hands—

Still the mind sometimes gets despondent. Sisters, there is a *God*—a father—*Mother* who never leaves his children—never, never, never—Put uncanny theories aside and becoming children take refuge in Him—I cannot write more—I am weeping like a woman.

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Blessed Blessed art thou Lord God of my Soul—
Yours affly Vivekananda—

News of the Calcutta Meeting duly reached the American papers. This time, however, a dissenting voice was heard. The *Critic*, a periodical which was ordinarily favorable to Swamiji, viewed with a somewhat irritated and jaundiced eye the proceedings in Calcutta. The following article was printed on May 4, 1895:

> On the return [?] of their delegate, Swami Vivekananda from the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the Hindu community of Calcutta met in the Town Hall, 5 Sept., 1894, to thank him and the American people publicly. A large number of influential orthodox Pundits were in this great gathering of nearly 4000 people, and the speeches and proceedings were mostly in English. The English and Bengali texts are reprinted in a pamphlet, from which Oriental and American readers can find out what took place. We have read all the speeches that were given in English, and from them it is very evident that modern America has but just been discovered by these our Oriental brethren. It is very evident also, that the Hindu is as fond of hifaluting panegyric and bombastic conceit as is the American when he breaks loose on the Fourth of July. Apart from the naturally strong expression of faith and joy in their own Hindu tenets, we are informed by one of these fellow Aryans of ours of what we owe to the dwellers in the land of the Vedas. Almost everything of high thought and aspiration in Christendom, it seems, may be traced to one or another of the successive influxes of Hindu ideas. We learn also that, while America is starving for spiritual nourishment, pretty much all the men and women of light and leading among us are turning to Hinduism for mental food, and that the prospect of the people of the United States becoming Hindus is excellent. One must go abroad to get the latest home news. The pamphlet is well calculated to burn like red pepper in the eyes of the ultra-orthodox Christian hater of the study of comparative religions, and to warm the cockles of the hearts of all who would enjoy seeing Christianity sink to a level among the various religions of the world. The sagacious

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man who can read between the lines, who has some sense of humor, and who enjoys human nature in its various manifestations will appreciate this proof that in both its needs and aspirations, as well as in conceit and boasting, the whole world is kin. Only 2000 copies of these "Proceeding of the Calcutta Town Hall Meeting Regarding Swami Vivekananda" have been printed. (Calcutta: New Calcutta Press).

But although there may have been resentment in some quarters, there could no longer be doubt in anyone's mind that Swami Vivekananda was a prophet well honored in his own country.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EASTERN TOUR—II

I

To return to the summer of 1894, the season when crowds of people left the hot cities for country homes or resorts, Swamiji, too, took what might be called a vacation. The only information we have at present regarding his activities during July is gathered from two letters published in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works." The first of these was written to Mrs. Hale from Fishkill Landing, New York, where he was visiting Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey, and the second to the Hale sisters (by which term we generally mean the two McKindley sisters as well as the two Hale sisters) from Swampscott, Massachusetts. The Guernseys had evidently taken Swamiji into their family, much as the Hales had done in Chicago and the Bagleys in Detroit. It would seem that wherever he stayed for any length of time there was a family made especially for him—a family who loved him as their own and whom he loved, who understood his work, and who were in a position to help him. There were, of course, in every city many people who sincerely respected him; there were also those who were his close companions and with whom he felt entirely free. But, on the other hand, many were those who lionized Swamiji with little or no understanding of either his personality or his work. Especially was this true on the East coast, for as Swamiji's fame grew, so also did his invitations from the wealthy and the fashionable. In a postcript to his letter to Mrs. Hale from Fishkill Landing, he wrote:

". . . I am bearing the heat very well here. I had an invitation to Swampscott on the sea from a very rich lady whose acquaintance I made last winter in New York, but I declined with thanks. I am very careful now to take the hospitality of anybody here, especially the rich. I had a few other invitations from some very rich people here. I refused; I have by this time seen the whole business through. Lord bless you and yours, Mother Church, for your sincerity. Oh! it is so rare in this world."

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Nevertheless Swamiji *did* visit Swampscott in July. Whether he had a change of heart regarding the "very rich lady," or whether he received another invitation from someone else in Swampscott, we do not know. We only know at present that on July 26 he wrote from Swampscott to the Hale sisters a light-hearted, almost ecstatic letter, which would indicate that his spirits were soaring. From this letter, one also learns a little more of his activities. ". . . I am going to Greenacre," he wrote. "I had been to see Mrs. Breed. Mrs. Stone was there, with whom is residing Mrs. Pullman and all the golden bugs, my old friends hereabouts. They are kind as usual. On my way back from Greenacre I am going to Annisquam to see Mrs. Bagley for a few days. Darn it, I forget everything. I had duckings in the sea like a fish. I am enjoying every bit of it." In this same letter one sees again how close the Hale sisters were to him, how free they were with him—able to tease him, even to play jokes on him and be assured of his laughter. "What nonsense was the song Harriet taught me 'dans la plaine'?" he wrote, "the deuce take it. I told it to a French scholar and he laughed and laughed till the fellow was well nigh burst at my wonderful translation. That is the way you would have taught me French. You are a pack of fools and heathens, I tell you. Now are you gasping for breath like a huge fish stranded? I am glad that you are sizzling. Oh! how nice and cool it is here, and it is increased a hundred-fold when I think about the gasping, sizzling, boiling, frying four old maids, and how cool and nice I am here. Whoooooooo!"

Thinking of Swamiji's lectures, learning of the raps he could give ministers and matrons alike, considering the majesty with which he strode through America undaunted by hardship and malicious opposition, reading his letters of fiery leadership to India, and again, remembering the silent and fathomless depths of contemplation into which he often fell, one sometimes forgets how young he was, how ready to take duckings in the sea and to laugh heartily with those whom he loved. This was, of course, not only because he was barely in his thirties, but also because, living as he did on the very edge of the Infinite, where the great festival of the Divine Mother is continuously taking place, Swamiji was profoundly, eternally young.

In the last chapter we dwelt upon the trials Swamiji underwent during the summer of 1894, and the reader may have been left with an impression that this was a time of utter despondency for him. But such was not the case. Despite the fact that the outward circum-

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stances of his life were dark indeed, inwardly he was filled with spiritual joy, and from this inward and most important point of view, this summer can be looked upon as immensely fruitful. If there is a contradiction here, it is of the kind that has characterized the lives of all great prophets, who necessarily live on two levels—the human and the divine.

Nor is it altogether strange that Swamiji's spirits rose during the summer. Ever since his arrival in America in July of 1893 he had known little but cities and towns, trains and hotels. He had been under the constant strain of lecturing, making engagements, rushing here and there in accordance with a time schedule and, on the whole, living a life almost diametrically opposite to that of his years of wandering through the lofty Himalayas and vast plains of India. For a year he had kept his mind as much as possible in the relative world, restraining it from its natural state of spiritual absorption, lest, as was the case when he first arrived in America, he should become entirely oblivious of his surroundings, missing his engagements and perhaps even becoming lost in the maze of a foreign city. In this connection Sister Nivedita gives a picture of Swamiji during his first days in America. "There are still some amongst those who entertained him in Chicago in 1893," she writes in "The Master As I Saw Him," "who tell of the difficulty with which, on his first arrival in the West, he broke through the habit of falling constantly into absorption. He would enter a tram, and have to pay the fare for the whole length of the line, more than once in a single journey, perhaps, being too deeply engrossed in thought to know when he had reached his destination." As if it were not enough for Swamiji to become, as it were, a "man of action," attending to all the details that encumber the life of a lecturer and celebrity, he was forced to meet the nagging persecution of his enemies which, like the dregs of world thought, was inflicted upon him at every turn. Although that persecution had continued during the summer of 1894, he was at least afforded a respite from lecturing, and it is little wonder, therefore, that his mind at once soared upward like a spring suddenly released.

During this period one can detect a turning point in Swamiji's thought and the beginnings, at least, of a new idea regarding his mission in America. The enthusiasm with which he had at first gone from place to place explaining the customs and religions of his motherland had, to some extent, cooled, and we find his thoughts during the summer months beginning to work along new lines. One

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indication of this is to be found in a letter of July 26 to the Hale sisters: "Miss Philips has a beautiful place somewhere in N.Y. State," he wrote, "mountains, lake, river, forest altogether—what more? I am going to make a Himalayas there and start a monastery as sure as I am living—I am not going to leave this country without throwing one more apple of discord into this already roaring, fighting, kicking, mad whirlpool of American religion." Although this was written half in jest, it nonetheless shows that Swamiji was thinking in terms of an American ashrama. Another desire he had at this time was to write a book, a fact which indicates that new ideas were arising within his mind and seeking outward expression.

During the summer he was also, perhaps, beginning to relinquish his plans for raising money in America. In a letter dated August 20, which will be given in full later on, he wrote to Isabelle McKindley: "I have given up all money making schemes and will be quite satisfied with a bite and a shed and work on." This change of mind was no doubt due not to discouragement but to a dislike of money itself, inherent in the man of renunciation, for even though Swamiji was not attempting to raise money for himself but for India, the very sight and touch of it was repugnant to him. "You know the greatest difficulty with me is to keep or even to touch money," he wrote to Alasinga on August 31. "It is disgusting and debasing."

But Swamiji's work of lecturing about India and of trying to earn money for her had been the two ostensive objects of his life in America. If he was not to continue along these lines, then what pattern was his work to take? Surely, a change was taking place in his mind, and, on the whole, one cannot view this summer of 1894 as merely a period of relaxation for him, a sort of hiatus between seasons; it was rather a period of transition in which his mind, freed from daily pressure, tended toward its natural state of creative quiet, a state from which would eventually arise new modes of thought and activity. As though by some cosmic alchemy, the outward circumstances of his life at this time seem to have been ready-made for him. It was toward the end of July, when he was in a mood of spiritual creativity and when, consciously or unconsciously, he was seeking a new form of approach to the American people, that he went to Greenacre.

The community of Greenacre, newly founded by Miss Sarah J. Farmer, was, in a sense, one of the outcomes of the Parliament of Religions. It was a summer colony or retreat on the bank of the

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Piscataqua River, near Eliot, in Maine, the purpose of which was to put into practice the ideal of the harmony of all religions. The Greenacre Religious Conferences went considerably further than the Parliament of Religions in this respect, for they represented the overthrow of orthodox views and brought together the seething new religious thought of the age. Inevitably there were in the assemblage a number of cranks and followers of freakish, fly-by-night sects, and, at least during the first summer of the Conferences, a kind of wild exaltation pervaded the group. But for all that, the men and women of Greenacre had kicked over the traces of a narrow, stereotyped religion and were directing all their energies toward evolving a new pattern of faith. They were earnest, vital and unafraid. Among them, moreover, were thinkers, scholars and people who, in one way or another, were awake to the need of a spiritual renascence and who were earnestly struggling to bring it into being. Nowhere else could Swamiji have found in one place a group more receptive to his ideas and more ready to benefit from his influence. These circumstances, together with the fact that Greenacre offered to Swamiji the wide, unpaved vistas of open country and days in which his mind was free to plunge into profound contemplation or to lift in ecstasy, make it seem that, like other events in his life, the founding of the Greenacre Religious Conferences in 1894 was part of the same divine plan that had brought him to America.

It was Miss Sarah Farmer, whom Swamiji had met in New York, who had invited him to Greenacre. Miss Farmer was the daughter of the famous Moses Gerrish Farmer, who, some ten years prior to Edison's invention of a marketable electric bulb, had "lighted a house in Cambridge with forty incandescent lamps in multiple circuit." Mr. Farmer, it is recorded, used frequently to tell his daughter that the chief principle of the inventor was inspiration and that "he who could grasp that inspiration and walk boldly on, to him was vouchsafed the success that men respect and prize." Miss Farmer grasped the inspiration for Greenacre probably at the Parliament of Religions and walked boldly on, organizing the Greenacre Religious Conferences, to which anyone with something constructive to say might come and lecture. "We have no room for iconoclasts," she is reported as having said. "Those are the only ones we bar. All others are welcome to come and express their views. All are listened to with respect and attention."

The result was, of course, a symposium—if not a jumble—of every kind of religious thought—from Vedanta to the wildest spiritualism,

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With humor and with an all-encompassing tenderness, Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale of his companions at Greenacre:

> One Mr. Colville from Boston is here; he speaks every day, it is said, under spirit control. The Editor (?) of the *Universal Truth* from the top floor of Jimmy Mills has settled herself down here—She is conducting religious services and holding classes to heal all manner of diseases and very soon I expect them giving eyes to the blind, etc. etc. After all it is a queer gathering—They do not care much about social laws and are quite free and happy—Mrs. Mills is quite brilliant and so are many other ladies—A lady named Mrs. Chapin whom all along I had taken for a widder now proves to have a husband all along—She is a very beautiful lady—Another lady from Detroit, very cultured and with beautiful black eyes and long hair is going to take me to an island 15 miles into the sea. Hope we will have nice time—Mrs. Arthur Smith is here. Miss Guernsey went home from Swampscott . . . —It is a beautiful and nice place and the bathing is splendid—Cora Stockham has made a bathing dress for me and I am having as good times in the water as a duck. This is delicious even for the denizens of Mudville. . . . There is here Mr. Wood of Boston who is one of the great lights of your sect [Christian Science]. But he objects to belong to the sect of Mrs. Whirlpool [Mary Baker Eddy] so he calls himself a mental healer of metaphysical, chemico-physical-religiosio what not etc. . . . —Mrs. Figs of Mills Company gives a class every morning and Mrs. Mills is jumping all about the place. They are all in high spirits . . . You will be astounded with the liberty they enjoy in the camps, but they are very good and pure people—a little erratic that is all."

But aside from the religious oddities who romped over the hills, there were men and women of more serious and sound frame of mind. There was, for instance, Dr. Lewis G. Janes, who was to become one of Swamiji's devoted friends. "There is my friend, Dr. Janes of New York, President of the Ethical Culture Society [of Brooklyn]," Swamiji wrote to the Hales from Greenacre, "who has begun his lecture. I must go to hear him. He and I agree so much."

According to an early edition of "The Life," Swamiji had met

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Dr. Janes in New York prior to his visit to Greenacre. "At a lecture given in the parlour of a friend," "The Life" tells, "he chanced to meet Dr. Lewis G. Janes, . . . who was so much struck with his unusual attainments as well as with his message that he invited him at once to give a series of lectures on the Hindu Religion before the Brooklyn Ethical Association." (Actually, Janes invited Swamiji to give one lecture, which led to a series, which, in turn, as will be seen further on, was to have fateful consequences.)

Swamiji thought highly of the work carried on at Greenacre. In 1895 he wrote to Mrs. Bull, who had offered to contribute to his Indian fund: "I sincerely believe that you ought to turn all your help to Miss Farmer's Greenacre work this year. India can wait as she is waiting centuries and an immediate work at hand should always have the preference." In Miss Farmer's Greenacre work Swamiji saw the practical application of his teaching that religious growth never goes from evil to good but from good to better. In December of 1895 he wrote to her:

> There is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. It teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better—and still better. It stops short of nothing but acceptance. It teaches that no situation is hopeless, and as such accepts every form of mental, moral or spiritual thought where it already stands, and without a word of condemnation tells it that so far it has done good, now it is time to do better. . . . It above all teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.
>
> The Greenacre meetings last summer were so wonderful, simply because you opened yourself fully to that thought which has found in you so competent a medium of expression, and because you took your stand on the highest teaching of this thought that the kingdom of heaven already exists.
>
> You have been consecrated and chosen by the Lord as a channel for converting this thought into life, and every one that helps you in this wonderful work is serving the Lord.
>
> Our Gita teaches that he who serves the servants of the Lord is His highest worshipper. You are a servant of the Lord, and as a disciple of Krishna I will always consider it a

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privilege and worship to render you any service in the carrying out of your inspired mission wherever I be.

Sarah Farmer has been described as a gentle woman in gray, with steadfast eye and purpose, who "has given liberally of her patrimony, so liberally as to cause the selfish and the cautious to wonder." She was, indeed, so selfless, so sincere in her religious endeavor that she was one of the very few people from whom Swamiji would take advice regarding his work in America. ". . . through the mercy of Ramakrishna," he once wrote to Mrs. Bull, "my instinct 'sizes up' almost infallibly a human face as soon as I see it, and the result is this: you may do anything you please with my affairs, *I will not even murmur*—I will be only too glad to take Miss Farmer's advice, in spite of ghosts and spooks. Behind the spooks I *see* a heart of immense love, only covered with a thin film of laudable ambition—even that is bound to vanish in a few years."

To reach Greenacre one embarked upon a small river steamer at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and disembarked an hour or so later at the wooded and knolled acres of the retreat. On the flat land by the river, in which Swamiji sometimes "had as good times in the water as a duck," was "Sunrise Camp"—a group of small tents for those who could not afford the luxury of the Greenacre Inn. A little toward the hills was a much larger tent, at the peak of which waved a white flag. This was called the Eirenion or Hall of Peace. Here lectures were given and here also the heterogeneous worshipers meditated together. "Through all the throng," writes an impressed witness of the scene, "there was a silent sympathy. Yet in no two hearts were there the same ideals, the same beliefs." But spiritually substantial as the Hall of Peace may have been, it was, as were the smaller tents of Sunrise Camp, liable to be blown away by a strong wind. One remembers Swamiji's hilarious description of such an event in a letter to Mary Hale: "Yesterday there was a tremendous cyclone which gave a good 'treatment' to the tents. The big tent under which they had the lectures, had developed so much spirituality, under the 'treatment,' that it entirely disappeared from mortal gaze and about two hundred chairs were dancing about the grounds under spiritual ecstasy!"

On a hill that rose from the flat land was the Greenacre Inn, where the more wealthy visitors stayed. This inn was surrounded by several small cottages, one of which was named "Nightingale's Rest"

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in honor of the singer, Miss Emma Thursby, whom Swamiji had met in New York and who later became one of his followers. Over the hill, nearly a mile from the river, was a wood in which, here and there, rose towering pines named by Mrs. Ole Bull "the Lysekloster pines," in honor of her home in Norway. The Lysekloster pines were, perhaps, the most important part of Greenacre, for here religious classes were held daily, at which a teacher—Jewish, Christian (generally of a non-orthodox variety) or Hindu—would sit under his chosen pine, surrounded by his students. A reporter of the *Lewiston Saturday Journal* of August 12, 1899, has left an excellent picture of those forest classes:

> . . . The forenoon discourses of the early hour are in the tent near the Inn. But later all walk up over the hill to the Lysekloster pines. . . . A person standing at a little distance can scarcely see that there are people beneath the tree so lowly do the branches swing. A more delicious spot than one of these trees affords to listen I cannot conceive. The scene is far retired from all that can disturb. It is so far from the highway that there is no rumble of wheels. The only sound is the chirp of the birds and the voice of the speaker coming in mellowed tones from under the great tree.
>
> The listeners loll about on the ground as suits them best. A few of the elderly people have chairs. The middle-aged and young are entirely unconventional. Some lie on their backs listening and looking up into the blue arch of the heavens. Others lie resting on one elbow and meditatively pluck in pieces the leaves of the shrubs that surround, as they listen.

Under one of the tall Lysekloster pines, Swamiji held classes every afternoon, and thus it became known for years to come as "The Swami's Pine." There Swami Saradananda spoke and, later, Swami Abhedananda. Of Swamiji's classes we know unfortunately little at the present time, but from that little it is clear that in his exalted mood, surrounded by receptive and eager seekers of truth, he spoke more of philosophy than of the manners and customs of India. One gathers this from excerpts of the *Greenacre Voice*, a magazine published by the colony. Although the 1894 issues are no longer available, I have come across in another magazine (the *Arena*, October

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1899) one or two quotations taken from them. The first consists of Swamiji's translation of verses from the "Avadhuta Gita"—one of the most uncompromisingly monistic of Vedantic texts:

> Under the Swami's famous pine at Greenacre, Vivekananda said:
>
> "I am neither body nor changes of the body; nor am I senses nor object of the senses. I am Existence Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.
>
> "I am neither death nor fear of death; nor was I ever born, nor had I parents. I am Existence Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. Bliss Absolute. I am It. I am It.
>
> "I am not misery nor have I misery. I am not enemy nor have I enemies. I am Existence Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.
>
> "I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time; I am in everything, I am the basis of the universe—everywhere am I. I am Existence Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It."

Another scrap of quotation from the *Greenacre Voice* reads as follows:

> Says Vivekananda, "You and I and everything in the universe are that Absolute, not parts, but the whole. You are the whole of that Absolute."

As far as can be learned at the present, and to judge from the little we know of Swamiji's Greenacre classes, it was there that he taught for the first time in America the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta to a group of eager listeners. "I teach them all Shivoham, Shivoham," he wrote to Mary Hale, "and they all repeat it—innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds and so I am happy and glorified." Although it cannot be supposed that at Greenacre Swamiji formulated his later method of teaching in the West, this period can be thought of as a foreshadowing of what was to come—the beginnings of a new method of work.

Swamiji not only taught Advaita Vedanta beneath his pine, but, to his utmost joy, meditated and also slept beneath it. In his letter to Mary and Harriet Hale he wrote: "The other night the camp people

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went to sleep beneath a pine tree under which I sit every morning á la India and talk to them. Of course I went with them, and we had a nice night under the stars, sleeping on the lap of mother earth, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I cannot describe to you that night's glories—after a year of brutal life that I have led, to sleep on the ground, to meditate under the tree in the forest!" Swamiji again spoke of this blessed relief in a letter to Isabelle McKindley, which will be quoted in full later on: "Perhaps I did not tell you in my last how I slept and lived and preached under the trees and for a few days at least found myself once more in the atmosphere of heaven."

Indeed, to judge from Swamiji's letters, he was in a state of spiritual ecstasy at Greenacre, a state in which all things were to him "covered with God." Even the most commonplace of events were to him manifestations of divinity. One can picture him in the great storm that struck Greenacre on July 30, watching the campers battle with the cyclone and, no doubt, helping them save their tents from destruction. To others this may have been simply a necessary tussle with the wind and rain, but to Swamiji it was the glorious struggle of man's soul against the onslaughts of nature. To the Hale sisters he wrote: "Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything, hanging by their tent strings to keep them from being blown down, and standing on the majesty of their souls—these brave ones—it would have done your hearts good—I will go a hundred miles to see the like of them. Lord bless them."

Yet, although Swamiji was living in that state in which all things were fraught with glory, he was not by any means deceived by what was going on around him. While his vision penetrated to the spiritual reality behind people and events, he never overlooked anything; indeed, he perceived the surface reality with a clearness and accuracy not given to others. In the same letter in which he told of his great joy at witnessing the valor of the Greenacre campers, he wrote: "One thing—they are a dry sort of people here—and as to that very few in the whole world are there that are not. They do not understand 'Madhava,' the Sweet One. They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table turning, witchcraft, etc., etc. Nowhere have I heard so much about 'love, life and liberty' as in this country, but nowhere

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT GREENACRE

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is it less understood. Here God is either a terror or a healing power, vibration, and so forth. Lord bless their souls! And these parrots talk day and night of love and love and love!"

In the same vein, Swamiji wrote at another time and in another connection: "I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the Western world of late, it is for the most part full of motives unworthy or insane. For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are not very favourable to me."

But despite the Greenacre mystics by whom Swamiji was surrounded he was living in a state of high spiritual ecstasy. "Instead of materializing the spirit, i.e. dragging the spiritual to the material plane as these fellers do," he wrote to the Hale sisters, "convert the matter into spirit—catch a glimpse at least every day of that world of infinite beauty and peace and purity, the spiritual, and try to live in it day and night—Seek not—touch not with your toes anything which is uncanny—Let your souls ascend day and night like an unbroken string unto the feet of the beloved, whose throne is in your own heart, and let the rest take care of themselves—i.e. the body and everything else. . . .

"Stick to God. Who cares what comes in the body or in anywhere? Through the terrors of evil say My God, my love, through the pangs of death say My God, My Love, through all the evils under sun say My God, My love, Thou art here, I see Thee, Thou art with me I feel thee—I am Thine—take me—I am not of the world's but Thine—leave not Thou me. Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds. This life is a great chance—What—seekest thou the pleasures of this world? He is the fountain of all bliss—Seek for the highest, aim for the highest and you *shall* reach the highest."

Fortunately we have a picture of Swamiji taken at Greenacre, which shows his eyes looking as eyes look when the whole world is seen as permeated by Divinity. This picture was taken under Swamiji's pine and is the same as the one he spoke of in his letter to the Hale sisters: "Herewith I send a photograph Cora Stockham took of the group under the tree. It is only a proof and will fade away under exposure, but I cannot get anything better at present." Later a more durable print was evidently made, for the picture which is reproduced in this book has been taken from a finished photograph found among Isabelle McKindley's treasures. It is faded with age and unfortunately dim, but has otherwise survived.

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As the years went on Greenacre increased and flourished, many men and women offering their time and support. The work had no endowment, but rested simply, as Miss Farmer said, "on the promises of God which have never failed." According to a news article, many famous leaders of thought came during the summers to lecture and to give "their time and their efforts, grateful to be allowed the opportunity of addressing such an audience as groups under and around one of the great Lysekloster pines." "It appears a singular thing," this same report continued, "that so many famous people could have been attracted to this little town up in Maine; that they have been sufficiently interested in this work and this concourse of people, to be willing to come and give so freely that for which their admiring fellows in other parts were so anxious to pay."

All who wrote of Greenacre wondered at the sense of peace and upliftment the place imparted, a serenity, to be found nowhere else, that captivated faith-healers and sound philosophers alike. But was this attraction really to be wondered at? Here under the tall Lysekloster pines the great prophet of the age meditated and spoke in one of his most ecstatic moods—a mood comparable perhaps only to that which he experienced the following summer at Thousand Island Park. It was not really a "singular thing" that for many years afterwards hundreds were attracted to the "little town up in Maine." During the two weeks of Swamiji's visit to Greenacre, he not only enlightened scores of earnest seekers of truth but left behind him an atmosphere of intense spirituality. And during those same weeks he himself perhaps began to see in a new light his mission to America.

II

On Saturday, August 11, 1894, Swamiji wrote from Greenacre to the Hale sisters: "On Sunday I am going to lecture at Plymouth at the 'Sympathy of Religions' of Col. Higginson." In the early part of his life Thomas Wentworth Higginson had been a pastor of various Unitarian churches in Massachusetts. Later, having been an ardent Abolitionist, he fought in the Civil War, in which he organized and led the first regiment of Negro soldiers. But in 1864 Higginson retired from the Army and became known, not as a military man but as a writer, a liberal reformer and thinker, who leaned, as did many other Cambridge scholars, toward Transcendentalism and who con-

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tinued to do so long after that trend of thought had become outmoded. In 1894 Higginson was a vigorous seventy-one and might be met, as Van Wyck Brooks tells, "on his high-wheeled bicycle, bolt upright, scorching at five miles an hour through the streets of Cambridge." Higginson had spoken at the Parliament of Religions and was one of the few Christian speakers who seemed to comprehend the purpose of that gathering. He was also aware of its actual spirit, observing at one point during the proceedings that the universal feeling was that "each one of [the foreign delegates] might have been a very respectable man if he had been brought up in our Sunday schools." He did not "tolerate" other religions as "dim twilights" presaging the full glory of Christianity, but accepted each as an efficacious, though inadequate, pathway to God. "Each alone is partial, limited, unsatisfying," he had said in his paper, "The Sympathy of Religions"; "it takes all of them together to represent the . . . Religion of the Ages, Natural Religion." This was, of course, heresy. But Higginson, long famous for his liberalism, influenced thousands of thinking Americans newly emerged from the orthodox cocoon. It is not to be wondered at that he greatly admired Swamiji and subsequently invited him to speak at a meeting of the Free Religious Association, of which he was president and which had been founded by Emerson and others for the purpose of widening contemporary religious thought into an all-embracing sympathy.

Regrettably, Swamiji's lecture of August 12 before the Free Religious Association at Plymouth, Massachusetts, is not at present available, but the very fact that he had been invited to lecture before that body is a sound indication that the circles of liberal religious thought allied themselves with him.

Leaving Plymouth, Massachusetts, Swamiji again visited his New York friends, Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey, who were spending the summer at the small town of Fishkill Landing, on the bank of the Hudson River. Here he stayed only a few days and then, on the invitation of Mrs. John Bagley, traveled to her summer home in Annisquam, Massachusetts.

It was almost a year to the day since Swamiji had first visited Annisquam as a guest of Professor John Henry Wright and had there given his first lecture in an American church. He had then been unknown; the officials of the Parliament of Religions had refused to accept him as a delegate; he had had no credentials, little money, indeed nothing but a few newly made friends and some ochre robes.

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He had written at that time, "I am trying my best to find out any plank I can float upon . . ." Now, a year later, he was famous, recognized by thousands as a great exponent of Hinduism and loved and revered as a prophet by innumerable loyal and influential friends. In the fitness of things, it was while Swamiji was in Annisquam that he received news of the Madras Address, a document that put the seal of official approval upon his year of labor in America.

The time had changed; but except for a greater mastery of English oratory, a greater knowledge of the American people, and, above all, a greater manifestation of spiritual power, Swamiji himself had not changed. He was still, as Mrs. Bagley wrote of him, "a strong, noble human being who walks with God . . . as simple and trustful as a child." He was still and always the very embodiment of purity, whom the world could not harm either by vicious criticism or by fervid admiration—and of both he had had a lion's share.

Swamiji arrived in Annisquam around August 16 and remained until (at the earliest) September 4. "I shall be here," he wrote to Mary Hale on August 31, "till Tuesday next [September 4] at least, on which day I am going to lecture here in Annisquam." Since the village was too small to support a newspaper of its own, this lecture was reported by the *Gloucester Daily Times* of September 6, as follows:

ANNISQUAM LECTURE

Mechanic Hall was well filled on Tuesday evening to hear the lecture given by our visiting friend, the Hindoo monk. He was introduced to the audience by Prof. Wright, who also made some preliminary remarks befitting the occasion. The Lecturer alluded to the visit he made to this village last year, and stated that the address he gave here at that time in the church was the first public discourse that he ever gave in English or in his native language; and kindly thanked his friends present who induced him to attempt the same. The religion of India was explained at some length by the speaker from a metaphysical standpoint, showing the working of his mind and the thought following, yet his ideas were broad and liberal, when practically applied,

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We are able to learn a little more about Swamiji's stay in Annisquam from a hitherto unpublished letter, which he wrote to Isabelle McKindley on August 20:

Annisquam
20th August '94

Dear Sister:

Your very kind letter duly reached me at Annisquam. I am with the Bagleys once more. They are kind as usual. Professor Wright was not here. But he came day before yesterday and we have very nice time together. Mr. Bradley of Evanston whom you have met at Evanston was here. His sister in law had me sit for a picture several days and had painted me. I had some very fine boating and one evening overturned the boat and had a good drenching clothes and all—

I had very very nice time at Greenacre. They were all so earnest and kind people. Fanny Hartley and Mrs. Mills have by this time gone back home I suppose.

From here I think I will go back to New York. Or I may go to Boston to Mrs. Ole Bull. Perhaps you have heard of Mr. Ole Bull the great violinist of this country. She is his widow. She is a very spiritual lady. She lives in Cambridge and has a fine big parlour made of woodwork brought all the way from India. She wants me to come over to her any time and use her parlour to lecture. Boston of course is the great field for everything but the Boston people as quickly take hold of anything as give it up. While the New Yorkers are slow but when they get hold of anything they do it with a mortal grip.

I have kept pretty good health all the time and hope to do in the future. I had no occasion yet to draw on my reserve yet I am rolling on pretty fair. And I have given up all money making schemes and will be quite satisfied with a bite and a shed and work on.

I believe you are enjoying your summer retreat. Kindly convey my best regards and love to Miss Howe and Mr. Frank Howe.

Perhaps I did not tell you in my last how I slept and lived and preached under the trees and for a few days at least found myself once more in the atmosphere of heaven.

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Most probably I will make New York my centre for the next winter—and as soon as I fix on that I will write to you. I am not yet settled yet in my ideas of remaining in this country any more. I can not settle anything of that sort I must abide my time. May the Lord bless you all for ever and ever is the constant prayer of your ever affectionate

brother
Vivekananda

Swamiji evidently had many boat rides during the summer of 1894. In a letter to India he refers to the New Englander's preoccupation with sailboats. "Here in summer they go to the sea-side—I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yachting. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them every day to the sea, and return home, to eat and drink and dance—while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!" This picture of life in a New England resort town is accurate, but while the piano music of the gay nineties might at times have become unendurable, Swamiji evidently did not mind his drenching in the sea. He refers to it again in reply to concerned inquiries from the Hale family. To Mary Hale he writes, "I have plenty of gowns already, in fact, more than I can carry with ease. When I had that drenching in Annisquam I had on that beautiful black suit you appreciate so much, and I do not think it can be damaged any way; it also has been penetrated with my deep meditations on the Absolute. . . . Kindly tell Mother that I do not want any coat now."

Of this same visit to Annisquam Swamiji's hostess, Mrs. Bagley, later wrote in a letter defending him from his enemies: ". . . No one can know him without respecting his integrity and excellence of character and his strong religious nature. At Annisquam last summer I had a cottage and we wrote Vivekananda, who was in Boston, inviting him again to visit us there, which he did, remaining three weeks, not only conferring a favor upon us, but a great pleasure I am sure, to friends who had cottages near us."

The summer was over. Schools and colleges were opening and people were returning from mountain and seaside resorts to the cities. Swamiji's second year of lecturing in America began in Boston, where

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he spent nearly the entire month of September. The little that is known of this Boston visit must at present be pieced together from his published letters, for the Boston papers were curiously silent regarding his lectures. We can only surmise that for the most part they were delivered before private or semiprivate gatherings.

Evidently Swamiji had made arrangements to lecture in Boston during his last week or so in Annisquam, for prior to this there is no intimation of the fact that he intended to go there. In his letter of August 20 to Isabelle McKindley he writes, "From here [Annisquam] I think I will go back to New York. Or I may go to Boston [Cambridge] to Mrs. Ole Bull." But actually Swamiji did neither of these things. The next letter we know of was written to Mary Hale on September 13 from the Hotel Bellevue, Beacon Street, Boston. "I have been in this hotel for about a week," he writes. "I will remain in Boston some time yet." On September 19 he wrote from the same hotel to Mrs. Ole Bull, who was evidently in New York at the time, "I am at present lecturing in several places in Boston."

But although the season had commenced and Swamiji was busy lecturing, the desire to write a book, which he had had since early July, was still strong. To his Madrasi disciple, Alasinga, he had written on July 11: "At this time of the year there is not much lecturing to be done here, so I will devote myself to my pen . . ." But he had found little time for writing during the summer months of 1894, and in September the need to set down his thoughts was unsatisfied. In a letter from Boston to Mary Hale we find a passage which is endearingly characteristic of those who are beset with an urge to write. First, the enchanting, if not altogether essential, paraphernalia must be purchased. "Today this vagabond lama was seized with a desire of going right along scribbling," Swamiji wrote on September 13, "and so I walked down and entering a store bought all sorts of writing material and a beautiful portfolio which shuts with a clasp and has even a little wooden ink-stand. So far it promises well. Hope it will continue."

But in Boston, where Swamiji was lecturing, he no doubt knew little of the quiet necessary to writing a book. In spite of his many activities, however, he did find time to compose his long and now famous reply to the Madras Address, which can be found in Volume IV of "The Complete Works." The reply was in part a highly scholarly dissertation on the origin of the various forms of Hinduism, on its organic unity, theoretical and practical, and on its superiority, and

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in part a rousing call to the slumbering genius of his motherland. He also at this time sent off many letters to India, as is evidenced by a note written to Isabelle McKindley on September 26:

Hotel Bellevue
European Plan,
Beacon Street.
Boston, 26th Sep 1894

Dear Sister

Your letter with the India mail just to hand. A quantity of Newspaper clippings were sent over to me from India. I send them back for your perusal and safekeeping.

I am busy writing letters to India last few days. I will remain a few days more in Boston.

With my love and blessings
Yours ever affly
Vivekananda

In these letters to India, as in his reply to the Madras Address, Swamiji poured forth his energy in an attempt to arouse his motherland, which through centuries of subjugation had lost confidence in its own cultural and religious life. Knowing that India's spiritual genius was both the source of her creative strength and her gift to the world, he was deeply concerned with awakening the Hindus to a new pride in and love for their own heritage. "One vision I see clear as life before me:" he wrote, "That the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction."

But the papers and letters which Swamiji dashed off in the white heat of inspiration were not what he meant by "writing." "What I want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my thoughts," he wrote to Mrs. Bull in his letter of September 19. "I had enough of speaking; now I want to write. I think I will have to go to New York for it. Mrs. Guernsey was so kind to me and she is ever willing to help me. I think I will go to her and sit down and write my book. . . . Kindly write me whether the Guernseys have returned to town or are still in Fishkill."

Mrs. Bull would, of course, not hear of Swamiji's finding peace anywhere but at her home in Cambridge, to which, presumably, she

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would soon return from New York and to which she invited him. On September 26 he replied to her invitation: "I have received both of your kind notes. I cannot express my gratitude for your kindness. I will have to go back to Melrose on Saturday and remain there till Monday. On Tuesday I will come over to your place. . . . For that is exactly what I wanted, a quiet place to write. Of course much less space will suffice me than what you have kindly proposed to put at my disposal. I can bundle myself up anywhere and feel quite comfortable."

Melrose is a town a few miles north of Boston, where Swamiji evidently lectured at least twice—the second time on Sunday, September 30. This lecture was probably his last in the vicinity of Boston in the fall of 1894, for on October 2 he went to Mrs. Ole Bull's home in Cambridge, where his desire for a quiet place to write was at last fulfilled.

Although Swamiji could not have met Mrs. Bull more than a few times before September, 1894, his relationship with her was already a close one. To judge from his letter of September 19, he had a deep regard for her, and she for him. "Dear Mother Sara," he writes, "I did not forget you at all. You do not think I will be ever as ungrateful as that? You did not give me your address, still I have been getting news about you from Landsberg through Miss Philips."

That Swamiji addressed Mrs. Bull as "Mother" was by no means a matter of Hindu rhetoric. He undoubtedly had at once felt a profound trust in her judgment and in her large heart—an intuitive trust which was not misplaced and which led him to write later, "Not only from the help you have given me but from my instinct (or as I call it, inspiration of my Master) I regard you as my mother, and will always abide by any advice you may have for me. . . ." It may be noted again that in the large cities of America—Chicago, Boston and New York—Swamiji had special friends who were not only influential but who loved him as a son or brother and revered him as a prophet. It is perhaps safe to say that such people were there by divine providence, for in the life of one so very close to God as Swamiji, there seems to be an almost cosmic design, both broad and detailed. Be that as it may, Mrs. Ole Bull played an important part in Swamiji's life and from the very first was extremely helpful to his work.

When Swamiji first met Mrs. Bull she was in her early forties and had been a widow for fourteen years. Aside from the fact that she was by nature warm-hearted, courageous, independent and, as Swamiji

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said, "very spiritual," her wide travels with her famous violinist husband, her experience with managers, audiences, and all that goes with public life, to say nothing of her close association with an artist, had well equipped her to help Swamiji, to give him not only good advice regarding his work in America but personal sympathy and understanding.

Before Mrs. Bull's marriage to the Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, she had been Miss Sara Thorp, the daughter of the Honorable Joseph G. Thorp, a rich lumberman and state senator of Madison, Wisconsin. In her youth, her family had lived in a spacious mansion, the finest house in Madison. Mrs. Thorp, a formidable woman of iron will, reigned as the city's social leader—"a reign," it is said, "that for brilliance and unchallenged authority has never since been equalled in the Wisconsin State capital." "The great house on 'Yankee Hill,'" this same account continues, "became the acknowledged social center of the town, and invitations to the Thorp lawn parties, musicales, amateur theatricals, and elaborate formal dinners were frantically sought." Naturally enough, the Thorps entertained visiting celebrities, and it was in the great house on Yankee Hill that the once-married sixty-year-old Ole Bull met and courted Sara Thorp, a girl of barely twenty. In "The Life of Ole Bull" by Mortimer Smith, the young Sara has been described as "black-haired, of a serious, rather melancholy sort of beauty, highly impressionable, passionately fond of music and—thanks to her mother—entirely ignorant of young men of her own age." She was a highstrung girl, idealistic and sensitive. The story goes that when she was seventeen she attended with her mother one of Ole Bull's concerts and then and there made up her mind that she would one day become his wife. She was of the same mind when, three years later, she met him socially.

As for Ole Bull his meeting with Sara was evidently a case of love at first sight. "But," says his biographer, "this romantic attachment between age and youth might well have come to nothing had it not been for a very remarkable woman, Sara's mother." Brushing aside the protests of her husband, Mrs. Thorp encouraged the romance until, in September of 1870, it culminated in marriage. It was a strange alliance; not only was there a forty years' difference between husband and wife, but a wide difference in background and temperament. Sara Bull belonged to a highly conventional Midwestern family; Ole Bull to the unconventional, free society of artists. Yet the couple were in love, and all might have gone well had not Mrs. Thorp, Mr. Thorp,

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MRS. OLE BULL AS A YOUNG WOMAN

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MRS. OLE BULL

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Joseph Thorp, their son, a Mrs. Abbie Shapleigh (Mrs. Thorp's companion) and *her* two children kept almost constant tab on the couple both in America and Europe. For several years this entourage lived with them, traveled with them, argued with them and incessantly gave them advice. Explosion continuously threatened until finally, after numerous and unsuccessful attempts to transform the impulsive and extravagant Ole Bull into a docile and respectable son-in-law, Mrs. Thorp came to the conclusion that he was not, after all, a suitable husband for her daughter. She forthwith engineered a separation and bundled Sara and her small daughter, Sara Olea, who had been born in 1871, home to Madison.

But as Sara Bull grew older she became a match for her mother. After two years of pining at home, she one day rebelled against parental authority, left Madison and rejoined her husband in Norway. After this, the Bulls lived a private and quiet life—if the life of a concert violinist may be said to be private and quiet. It was, at least, a life in which the Thorp family no longer interfered, but with which they finally came to terms. Henceforth peace reigned between Sara's family and Ole Bull. Mrs. Bull took charge of her impractical husband's affairs, virtually managed his concert tours, borrowed money from her father when necessary, and became, all in all, a mature and efficient wife to this aging, somewhat erratic man, whom she adored, indeed, whom she worshiped.

In the meantime, Mrs. Thorp, bored with Madison, moved her family to Cambridge where, to her delight, her son Joseph married the youngest daughter of the poet Longfellow. It was in Cambridge that the Bulls made their home—in a separate establishment—when they were in America, and it was there that Mrs. Bull continued to live after the death of her husband in 1880. She became, "The Life of Ole Bull" relates, "a well-known figure in Cambridge, and her spacious house on Brattle Street, where she lived until her death in 1911, was a famous gathering place for 'intellectual' society and for leaders of causes. She presided over her *salon* with a gentle, unobtrusive, and somewhat melancholy grace. Here she could be found introducing the Swami Vivekananda and his Vedanta philosophy to her cautious and faintly suspicious Cambridge friends, or discussing religion with William James, or playing accompaniments for the aggressive baritone of John Fiske. For two years she conducted in her house what she called 'the Cambridge Conferences'; here, in a large living room

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panelled in Indian teakwood and dominated by a bust and innumerable portraits of Ole Bull, one was privileged to listen to the controversial social questions of the day discussed by such figures as Professor James, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Josiah Royce, and Jane Addams. In the audience one could rub shoulders with such varied persons as the patrician Miss Alice Longfellow, Irving Babbitt, Professor Munsterberg, the still active Julia Ward Howe, and even a young woman named Gertrude Stein, then a student at Radcliffe."

But Mrs. Bull could provide a sanctuary in her Cambridge home as well as a lively *salon,* and it was here that in October of 1894 she offered Swamiji a place where he could write undisturbed. It is, of course, not unlikely that she persuaded him to give one or two informal talks in her large living room, and very possibly it was during this stay with Mrs. Bull that Swamiji became so intimately acquainted with Dr. William James. (It was perhaps at this time that he demonstrated for the noted philosopher the mystery of divine communion by plunging, in his presence, into samadhi.) But although Mrs. Bull may have introduced others of her friends to Swamiji she no doubt for the most part gave him an opportunity to rest and to write down his thoughts, for perceptive and sensitive as she was, she must have seen that he was in need of a few days of peace.

On September 21 Swamiji had written to Alasinga: "I have not been able to write a line yet for my proposed book. Perhaps I may be able to take it in hand later on. . . . I hope soon to return to India. I have had enough of this country, and especially as too much work is making me nervous. The giving of too many public lectures and constant hurry have brought on this nervousness. . . . So you see, I will soon return." And again on September 27 he had written: "This nonsense of public life and newspaper blazoning has disgusted me thoroughly. I long to go back to the Himalayan quiet."

Yet despite Swamiji's fatigue he continued, in the last part of 1894, to lecture wherever opportunity presented itself. It would appear, as has been pointed out before, that he was destined, before settling down in one place, to spread his influence throughout America, to scatter his blessing and the potent seeds of spirituality over wide areas, to meet thousands upon thousands of people and to stir not only their minds but the deep recesses of their souls—those depths which none but a prophet of his stature could reach and awaken. Therefore he did not remain long at Mrs. Bull's home in Cambridge.

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III

As far as can be known, Swamiji stayed with Mrs. Bull for only nine or ten days, for the next news we have of him is of his arrival in Baltimore, Maryland, on the evening of October 12. The reporter of the *Baltimore American* lost no time in interviewing him, and the following article, replete with various inaccuracies, appeared the next day:

A HIGH PRIEST OF INDIA

Swami Vivekananda Arrives in Baltimore
His Views on Religion

Swami Vivekananda, a Brahmin high priest of India, arrived in Baltimore last night, and is the guest of Rev. Walter Vrooman. He came to America over a year ago, to attend the Congress of Religions, at the World's Fair, in Chicago, and his address before that body made him one of the most popular representatives in the congress. In personal appearance Swami Vivekananda is a picturesque character. He is about five and a half feet tall and heavily built, weighing probably 225 pounds. His skin is dark, but it is the shade peculiar to the Asiatic races. His face is round and plump, and his head is crowned with a wealth of jet black, wavy hair, that falls on his forehead and reaches down nearly to his eyebrows. His eyes are as black as his hair, and they are bright and sparkling, and when he smiles he displays a set of almost perfect pearly teeth. His countenance is both handsome and striking, and in addition to this, he is as good-natured and jolly as it is possible for a man to be. The garb he wore last night was rather of a clerical cut; but he carries with him a costume such as he wears among his people, in India, and it is bright with scarlet and yellow. Though but thirty-three years of age, he is a profound scholar, and can fluently speak seven languages, and can read as many more. His English is beyond criticism.

To an American reporter last night Swami Vivekananda said: "I have been very favorably impressed with American institutions during my stay in this country. My time has

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been divided between four cities—Chicago, New York, Boston and Detroit. I never heard of Chicago when in India, but I had frequently heard of Baltimore. The main criticism I have to pass on America is that you have too little religion here. In India they have too much. I think the world would be better if some of India's surplus of religion could be sent over here, while it would be to India's profit if its people could have some of America's industrial advancement and civilization. I am a believer in all religions. I think there is truth in my religion ; I think there is truth in your religion. It is the same truth in all religions applying itself through various channels to the same end. I think the great need of the world is less law, and more godly men and women."

The word "Swami" means high priest or cardinal, and indicates Vivekananda's rank, while the latter is his family name. His family record reaches back 2,000 years. He is a member of the highest caste in India, and is counted an equal of the gods of his people, to whom he is an object of worship. His religion is Hinduism. His address at the Congress of Religions at Chicago last year was a profound production, and made a great impression on all who heard or read it.

Swami Vivekananda, during his stay in America, has been studying American institutions, particularly the American mode of government. He favors the establishment in this country of an international university, where all the religions of the world can be taught, for, he thinks there is no more need of American missionaries going to India than there is of Indian missionaries coming to America.

Swami Vivekananda is a charming conversationalist. He is familiar with the works of all the great writers in a dozen different tongues, and he quotes long selections from Spencer, Darwin, Mill or others of the great philosophers with a fluency that is surprising. Tomorrow evening he will appear on the stage of the Lyceum Theater in conjunction with the three Vrooman brothers, and will deliver an address. He will wear the costume of his native country.

The three Vrooman Brothers were, at the time of Swamiji's visit to Baltimore, in their early twenties—younger even than Swamiji himself. Yet the career of each was already varied. The three—

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Walter, Hiram and Carl—belonged to a family of five energetic boys, all of whom were, among other things, ministers. Three were Congregationalists, one a Baptist and another, Hiram, first a Congregationalist and later a Swedenborgian.

A story is told of the boyhood of Hiram and an older brother, perhaps Walter, which is illustrative of the Vrooman gift for enterprise. When a boy of twelve, Hiram and his fourteen-year-old brother, being in delicate health, were sent by their parents from their home in Kansas to one of the Western springs, so popular in those days as panaceas for all ills. It appears, however, that Hiram and his brother had small use for the springs, for shortly, having met a pedlar of a remarkable soap guaranteed to remove all stains, the boys, who evidently had money for their cure, bought out his stock, bought also the secret of manufacture, and forthwith proceeded to peddle soap. Starting on an itinerant enterprise, manufacturing the "Lightning Cleaner" and selling it along the road, they worked their way to Denver, Colorado. There, tired of peddling, and finding the Denver Exposition in progress, they invested their earnings in peanuts and opened a peanut stand. The peanut business flourished ; Hiram and his brother cleared enough not only to pay all their expenses from the time they had left home, but to send two hundred dollars, a sizable amount in those days, to their parents, who by this time must surely have been at their wits' end. But the Vrooman boys were not through adventuring. They left Denver and embarked upon a lecture tour, the elder, who was now fifteen, lecturing on phrenology and Hiram, thirteen, acting as advance agent.

The story reads like the true American adventure story, and it could happen, of course, only in nineteenth-century America, when the country was a vast playground and where opportunity was waiting even for small boys. But adventure never seemed to come to an end for the Vrooman brothers. It is true that, after their lecture tour, the two boys returned to Kansas and soberly went to school. Hiram later took a special course at Harvard and then became a newspaper man, working as editor and reporter on a New York daily. He soon abandoned this course of action, however, in favor of theological studies and shortly entered the Congregational Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, as a minister. This was not to last long. He began to study the doctrine of the Swedenborgians and in 1893, when he visited Baltimore to officiate temporarily at the Associate Reformed Congregational Church, was invited to occupy the pulpit of the New Jerusalem, or Swedenborgian, Church. He accepted this post and was still holding it

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when the Vrooman brothers invited Swamiji to Baltimore as their guest. It should be mentioned, however, that in the first part of 1895, at the age of twenty-three, Hiram Vrooman resigned his pastorate at the New Jerusalem Church in order, as he said, to devote his entire time to literary work.

Unless Walter Vrooman was the elder of the pair of adventuresome boys who peddled soap, we know little of his career prior to Swamiji's visit to Baltimore. It is said, however, that in 1886, when he must have been still in his teens, he made his reputation as a political speaker in Henry George's campaign for mayor of New York. In 1894 he was on the staff of the *Arena Magazine* and was also pastor of the People's Congregation in Baltimore, which held weekly meetings at the Lyceum theater.

Carl Vrooman, the youngest of the brothers, was probably barely in his twenties at the time of Swamiji's visit and was still studying for the ministry. A bright boy, he was president of the Intercollegiate Debating Union.

Although the Vrooman brothers seemed to be preoccupied with religion, their interest was primarily centered in politics. The three young men zealously crusaded for a New People's Party, the platform of which included many long-needed reforms such as: "The abolition of 'child labor' and the 'sweating system' by federal statute"; also, "Government ownership of all monopolies, both natural and unnatural." The Vrooman brothers' meetings on "Dynamic Religion" were actually and avowedly political campaigns, dynamic religion being to them identical with progressive political action. It was typical of their enterprising spirit that they invited so unfailing a drawing card to speak with them as Swamiji, the famous and "dynamic" Hindu monk. We do not know at present, however, what induced Swamiji to accept their invitation, nor, for that matter, how the Vroomans contacted him. Possibly they had managed to meet him in Boston and there lured him to Baltimore with talk of plans for an international university—a project which was dear to Swamiji's heart. The Vrooman vitality and forthrightness may also have appealed to him, for despite their obsession with political reform, the brothers were, to say the least, spirited.

There was much to be desired, however, in the Vrooman hospitality. The brothers not only put up Swamiji at a hotel, a breach of manners which for one reason or another may have been unavoidable, but they made no advance arrangements for him. Young though they

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were, the Vrooman brothers were not without experience and must have been well aware that racial prejudice existed in Baltimore; they must also have been aware that their guest, whose skin was dark, would be treated with distrust and rudeness by undiscriminating hotel clerks. Yet, on Swamiji's arrival in Baltimore, the Reverend Walter Vrooman conducted him to one third-rate hotel after another, only to have him turned away. Of this incident Swamiji wrote to Mrs. Bull: "You need not be sorry on account of the ill-treatment I received at the hands of a low class hotel-keeper at Baltimore. It was the fault of the Vrooman Brothers. Why should they take me to a low hotel?"

At length, the Reverend Walter Vrooman took Swamiji to the Hotel Rennert, the most fashionable hotel in Baltimore, and there, after procuring a room for him, evidently left him to his own devices. The next we know, a reporter from the *Sunday Herald* found Swamiji seated with majestic calm in the hotel lobby. It will be seen from the following article, which appeared in the *Sunday Herald* of October 14, 1894, that despite their clumsiness as hosts and despite the fact that Hiram Vrooman was under the impression that Swamiji was a Buddhist priest, the brothers held their guest in high regard:

A WISE MAN AMONG US

Visit of a Distinguished Hindoo Priest to This City

He is a Guest of the Vrooman Brothers and Is Interested in the Establishment of an International University of Religions—His Gorgeous Garb.

Seated in the main lobby of the Hotel Rennert yesterday afternoon was a personage clad in maroon dressing-gown, bound with a red sash. His face was dark, and mystically dignified, its lineaments expressive at once of both intellectuality and sentiment. His complexion was a deep olive, his eyes large, black and luminous, his hair black as midnight, his brow a study for the physiognomist. Taken all in all, his head was such a one as would delight the believer in phrenology.

The man was Swani Vivecananda, the Brahmin high priest, whose arrival has created such a furore in local religious circles. He was the observed of all observers. In

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his hand he held a copy of a leading magazine, which he was perusing with interest. Mr. Vivecananda conversed with a SUNDAY HERALD reporter, speaking English with ease and with an accent similar to that of an educated Italian. He displayed the greatest familiarity with the institutions of this country, religious, political and social.

Mr. Vivecananda came to Baltimore at the invitation of the Vrooman brothers, Hiram, Carl and Walter, and while in this city will be their guest. Rev. Hiram Vrooman was seen at his residence, 1122 North Calvert Street, yesterday, and talked freely in reference to the visit of the distinguished guest.

"Mr. Vivecananda," he said, "is one of the most intelligent men I have ever met. He came to this city at our invitation, and while here will confer with us in reference to the founding of the international university, which it is proposed to establish as an outcome of the World's Congress of Religions, which was such an interesting feature of the World's Fair. This university is one of Mr. Vivecananda's pet ideas, and has the full sympathy of myself and my brothers, and also a number of gentlemen of wealth and position, including several religions. Among its promoters are members of the Roman Catholic and Hebrew religions. The idea of the university is education in general religion.

"When founded its head will be one of the most distinguished educators in this country, and its faculty will include professors selected from all religions. Mr. Vivecananda was sent to this country by the ecclesiastics of the Buddhist religion in India to study our religious and political systems. His expenses are paid by the ecclesiastical authorities of the Buddhist faith. He was its representative at the World's Congress. One of Mr. Vivecananda's ideas in the establishing of the university is that it may serve to educate a superior kind of missionary for work in India. While he is steadfast to his own religious belief, he wishes that the present system of sending ignorant men as missionaries to India may be discontinued and men sent there who can teach the Christian religion from an elevated standpoint. In this wish he is animated only by a desire for the good of general religion.

"He is one of the widest-informed men on religious topics I ever knew. It may be of interest to Roman

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Catholics to know that he was the first man to translate the works of Thomas a'Kempis, the great theologian of their faith, the favorite philosopher of Pope Leo, into the Sanscrit tongue. He carries a volume of the works of St. Thomas about with him constantly.

"Mr. Vivecananda told me that his father was a great believer in the Lord Jesus, as he called Him, and that when a boy he had read in the Gospel of St. John the thrilling description of the crucifixion of the Savior and wept over it. He will remain in this city for several weeks. To-morrow evening he will deliver a brief address at our meeting at the Lyceum, and on Sunday week will speak at length at our second meeting on the university plan.

"I can say relative to the university that it is to be located near Boston, and that a meeting to give it definite shape will be held soon. Mr. Vivecananda will not leave this country until it is established. He does not receive money from any one or eat meat, both being against the laws governing this caste. Before becoming a priest he had studied English law in India."

As has been said, the Vrooman brothers had probably used the project of the international university, or Temple Universal, to lure Swamiji to Baltimore, and no doubt they had done so in good faith. But as far as can be learned from the newspaper reports, which are fairly complete, the Sunday meetings were not remotely concerned with "the university plan." On Sunday, October 14, Swamiji spoke, or as it was said, assisted the brothers, at the first of these meetings, which was reported by both the *Baltimore American* and the *Sun* of October 15 in articles that read, respectively, as follows:

LESS DOCTRINE, MORE BREAD

The Words of the High Priest of India
A Meeting at the Lyceum

The Lyceum Theater was crowded last night at the first of a series of meetings by the Vrooman Brothers. The subject discussed was "Dynamic Religion." The story of David and Goliath was discussed by Rev. Hiram Vrooman, Mr. Carl Vrooman and Rev. Walter Vrooman. In the course of his

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remarks, Rev. Hiram Vrooman said the most popular preachers today were generally those who manifest the greatest ingenuity in arranging the lights in the heavens without disturbing the darkness that is gathered over the church pews and over the city. "We are," said he, "in a crisis of the world's history. If shot and shell were breaking the air and brass bands playing war marches, I would not be a particle more interested in what daily transpires than I am now in these times of apparent peace, when the great movements are developing which are to bless or curse the millions of our race who are yet to live."

Mr. Carl Vrooman followed. In the course of his remarks, he said: "What we need is less of that cowardice which calls itself humility, and less of that trust which lolls in luxurious piety, while Lazarus and his million brothers are starving and sinning within easy reach, trusting that in his own good time and way God will provide."

Rev. Walter Vrooman said: "Dynamic religion means religion in motion, and is opposed to that religion at rest which is locked up in the hundreds of huge stone buildings scattered throughout our cities, during the whole week, with the exception of a couple of hours, during which time the people are allowed to go in and nibble at it as though it had a sort of medicinal effect in easing the pains caused by conscience."

Swami Vivekananda, the high priest from India, was the last speaker. He spoke briefly, and was listened to with marked attention. His English and his mode of delivery were excellent. There is a foreign accent to his syllables, but not enough to prevent him from being plainly understood. He was dressed in the costume of his native country, which was decidedly picturesque. He said he could speak but briefly after the oratory that had preceded him, but he could add his endorsement to all that had been said. He had traveled a great deal, and preached to all kinds of people. He had found that the particular kind of doctrine preached made little difference. What is wanted is practical sort of work. If such ideas could not be carried out, he would lose his faith in humanity. The cry all over the world is "less doctrine and more bread." He thought the sending of missionaries to

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India all right; he had no objections to offer, but he thought it would be better to send fewer men and more money. So far as India was concerned, she had religious doctrine to spare. Living up to the doctrines was needed more than more doctrines. The people of India, as well as the people all over the world, had been taught to pray, but prayer with the lips was not enough; people should pray with their hearts. "A few people in the world," he said, "really try to do good. Others look on and applaud, and think that they themselves have done great good. Life is love, and when a man ceases to do good to others, he is dead spiritually."

On Sunday evening next Swami Vivekananda will make the address of the evening at the Lyceum.

THE VROOMAN BROTHERS

They Expound Religion of Action at the Lyceum Theatre.

Assisted by Swami Vivekananda

The Last Mentioned is a Hindoo High Priest Who Is Traveling through the United States—Commending The Action of Dr. Parkhurst in New York.

Dynamic religion, or religion of action, was expounded in addresses last night at the Lyceum Theatre by Rev. Hiram Vrooman, Rev. Walter Vrooman and Mr. Carl Vrooman.

The three are brothers. Rev. Hiram Vrooman is pastor of New Jerusalem Church, Baltimore. Rev. Walter Vrooman is a member of the Arena Magazine staff. Mr. Carl Vrooman is president of the Intercollegiate Debating Union, and was last year winner in the debate for the championship between Harvard and Yale Universities.

Swami Vivekananda, a Hindoo high priest, added his testimony to that of the other speakers in urging the necessity of more practice and less preaching in overcoming evil.

The theatre was crowded with an audience which showed appreciation of the address and evident sympathy with their object by earnest attention and frequent applause.

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Vivekananda was one of the delegates to the World's Congress of Religions last year at Chicago. He has since been traveling about the United States, studying American customs and institutions. He wears a costume of a bright red cloak and yellow turban, with a long streamer hanging down his back. He speaks fluently in English.

On account of his bronze skin Vivekananda had a little difficulty securing hotel accommodations when he arrived in Baltimore on Saturday. Rev. Walter Vrooman took him to four hotels before he was accepted as a guest at the Rennert.

Doctrines Enough.

Vivekananda sat on the stage last night with imperturbable stolidity until it came his turn to speak. Then his manner changed and he spoke with force and feeling. He followed the Vrooman brothers and said there was little to add to what had been said save his testimony as a "man from the Antipodes."

"We have doctrines enough," he continued. "What we want now is practical work as presented in these speeches. When asked about the missionaries sent to India I reply all right. But we want money more and men less. India has bushels full of doctrines and to spare. What is wanted is the means to carry them out.

"Prayer may be done in different ways. Prayer with the hands is yet higher than prayer with the lips and is more saving.

"All religions teach us to do good for our brothers. Doing good is nothing extraordinary—it is the only way to live. Everything in nature tends to expansion for life and contraction for death. It is the same in religion. Do good by helping others without ulterior motives. The moment this ceases contraction and death follow."

Goliath in Baltimore.

Rev. Hiram Vrooman opened the meeting by reading the story of David and Goliath.

"The same identical armies that are described in this story," he said, "are encamped now upon the hills of Baltimore. Every day Goliath comes out of the Philistine

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camp and proclaims his mockeries against the altruistic teachings of Jesus. Twenty-one hundred saloons, with their train of ruined homes and blasted lives, produce the spectacle of his grinning face, and ill-gotten gold, the product of fraud, is his armour. . . ."

The Reverend Hiram Vrooman, and, later, Walter and Carl Vrooman, went on in this vein at some length. And although Swamiji listened with "imperturbable stolidity," I do not think the present readers need be burdened with the Vrooman orations regarding the corruption in Baltimore politics in 1894.

Swamiji remained in Baltimore until the following Sunday, when he again lectured with the Vrooman brothers. There is the possibility that during this time he was invited to stay at the home of some newly acquired Baltimore friend, and the certainty that, despite the Vrooman brothers, he was well entertained; for in his letter of October 27 to Mrs. Bull he assured her that "the American women as everywhere came to my rescue, and I had very good time." (Probably Mrs. Patterson, wife of the American Consul-General in Calcutta in 1898, who accompanied Swamiji during his travels in Kashmir, was one of these American women.)

The second meeting of the Vrooman brothers was held on Sunday, October 21, at which time Swamiji was the main speaker. It was natural, in view of the brothers' preoccupation with "Goliath," that he should speak of Buddha, who discovered the very root of all evil, all suffering. In the following report from the *Morning Herald* of October 22, I have omitted the talks of the Vroomans. Suffice it to say that they were long, verbose, and again concerned with political immorality.

BUDDHA'S HIGH PRIEST

He Speaks to 3,000 People at the Lyceum.

Second of the Vrooman Brothers' Meetings in the Interest Of "Dynamic Religion"—The Judiciary and How It Should be Maintained.

An audience which filled the Lyceum Theatre from pit to dome assembled last night at the second of the series of

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meetings held by the Vrooman Brothers in the interest of "Dynamic Religion." Fully 3,000 persons were present.

Half of the assembly were ladies. The interest was maintained throughout, and in several instances the remarks of the speakers were greeted with applause. Addresses were made by the Rev. Hiram Vrooman, Rev. Walter Vrooman and Rev. Swarri Vivekananda, the Brahmin High Priest now visiting this city. The speakers of the evening were seated on the stage, the Rev. Vivekananda being an object of particular interest to all. [The Vroomans' expectations of Swamiji's drawing power were evidently fulfilled.]

He wore a yellow turban and a red robe tied in at the waste [sic] with a sash of the same color, which added to the Oriental cast of his features and invested him with a peculiar interest. His personality seemed to be the feature of the evening. His address was delivered in an easy, unembarrassed manner, his diction being perfect and his accent similar to that of a cultured member of the Latin race familiar with the English language. He said in part:

The High Priest Speaks.

"Buddha began to found the religion of India 600 years before the birth of Christ. He found the religion of India at that time mainly engaged in eternal discussions upon the nature of the human soul. There was no remedy according to the ideas then prevailing for the cure of religious ills but sacrifices of animals, sacrificial altars and similar methods.

"In the midst of this system a priest was born who was a member of one of the leading families who was the founder of Buddhism. His was, in the first place, not the founding of a new religion, but a movement of reformation. He believed in the good of all. His religion, as formulated by him, consisted of the discovery of three things: First, 'There is an evil'; second, 'What is the cause of this evil?' This he ascribed to the desires of men to be superior to others, an evil that could be cured by unselfishness. Third, 'This evil is curable by becoming unselfish.' Force, he concluded, could not cure it; dirt cannot wash dirt; hate cannot cure hate.

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"This was the basis of his religion. So long as society tries to cure human selfishness by laws and institutions whose aim is to force others to do good to their neighbors, nothing can be done. The remedy is not to place trick against trick and force against force. The only remedy is in making unselfish men and women. You may enact laws to cure present evils, but they will be of no avail.

"Buddha found in India too much talking about God and His essence and too little work. He always insisted upon this fundamental truth, that we are to be pure and holy, and that we are to help others to be holy also. He believed that man must go to work and help others; find his soul in others; find his life in others. He believed that in the conjunction [sic] of doing good to others is the only good we do ourselves. He believed that there was always in the world too much theory and too little practice. A dozen Buddhas in India at the present time would do good, and one Buddha in this country would also be beneficial.

"When there is too much doctrine, too much belief in my father's religion, too much rational superstition, a change is needed. Such doctrine produces evil, and a reformation is necessary."

At the conclusion of Mr. Vivekananda's address there was a hearty burst of applause.

The *Baltimore American* of October 22 also reported on Swamiji's talk, giving no space to those of the Vroomans:

THE RELIGION OF BUDDHA

Swami Vivekananda's Address at the Lyceum Theater.

The Lyceum Theater was crowded to the doors last night at the second meeting of the series conducted by the Vrooman brothers on "Dynamic Religion." Swami Vivekananda, of India, made the principal address. He spoke on the Buddhist religion, and told of the evils which existed among the people of India at the time of the birth of Buddha. The social inequalities in India, he said, were at that period a thousand

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times greater than anywhere else in the world. "Six hundred years before Christ," he continued, "the priesthood of India exercised great influence over the minds of the people, and between the upper and nether millstone of intellectuality and learning the people were ground. Buddhism, which is the religion of more than two-thirds of the human family, was not founded as an entirely new religion, but rather as a reformation which carried off the corruption of the times. Buddha seems to have been the only prophet who did everything for others and absolutely nothing for himself. He gave up his home and all the enjoyments of life to spend his days in search of the medicine for the terrible disease of human misery. In an age when men and priests were discussing the essence of the deity, he discovered what people had overlooked, that misery existed. The cause of evil is our desire to be superior to others and our selfishness. The moment that the world becomes unselfish all evil will vanish. So long as society tries to cure evil by laws and institutions, evil will not be cured. The world has tried this method ineffectually for thousands of years. Force against force never cures, and the only cure for evil is unselfishness. We need to teach people to obey the laws rather than to make more laws. Buddhism was the first missionary religion of the world, but it was one of the teachings of Buddhism not to antagonize any other religion. Sects weaken their power for good by making war on each other."

Revs. Hiram and Walter Vrooman also spoke.

IV

On October 22 or 23 Swamiji left Baltimore for Washington, where he stayed as the guest of Mrs. Enoch Totten, who was, as he wrote to Mrs. Bull, "an influential lady here and a metaphysician. . . ." Mrs. Totten, as will be seen shortly, was a niece of a woman who was a friend of the Hales, who had helped Swamiji in his work and of whom he was very fond. In regard to his Washington visit we are fortunate enough to be in possession of a heretofore unpublished letter written by him to Isabelle McKindley and postmarked October 26:

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Washington
c/o Mrs. E. Totten
1708 *W* I Street

Dear Sister:

Excuse my long silence but I have been regularly writing to mother church. I am sure you are all enjoying this nice cool weather. I am enjoying Baltimore and Washington very much. I will go hence to Philadelphia. I thought Miss Mary was in Philadelphia and so I wanted her address. But as she is in some other place near Philadelphia I do not want to give her the trouble to come up to see me as mother church says.

The lady with whom I am staying is Mrs. Totten a niece of Miss Howe. I will be her guest more than a week yet so you may write to me to her care.

I intend going over to England this winter somewhere in January or February A lady from London with whom one of my friends is staying has sent an invitation to me to go over as her guest and from India they are urging me every day to come back.

How did you like Pitoo in the cartoon? Do not show it to anybody. It is too bad of our people to caricature Pitoo that way.

I long ever so much to hear from you but take a little more care to make your letter just a bit more distinct. Do not be angry for the suggestion.

Your ever loving brother
Vivekananda

Although Swamiji intended, as he said, to leave America in January or February of 1895, it is well known that he did not do so. He himself was aware that his plans made in the fall of 1894 were only tentative. When requested by his disciple, Alasinga, to send an itinerary of his tours and to outline the substance of his lectures, he replied in a letter of October 27: "I am doing here exactly what I used to do in India. Always depending on the Lord and making no plans ahead."

In answer to this letter from Washington, Swamiji's Madrasi disciples wrote on November 29 a joint reply, the following excerpts from which show their deep and touching love for their absent Guru.

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G. G. Narasimhacharya, of whom Swamiji once wrote, "G. G.'s nature is of the emotional type," contributed the first section, Alasinga the second, and Kidi the third:

Madras
Pachaiyappa's College
29th Nov—'94

Beloved Swamiji,

Your last letter from Washington to hand. Your Baltimore tour we hope will be more effective to the satisfaction of Rev Mr Vrooman. Some of the hostels might have been a little cold at the beginning but we hope that it is all for good; but we believe Baltimore will appreciate you better.

Your last letter seemed to us not to have been written in your usual mood. There is more of exhaustion visible in it. So far as we are concerned we do not very much complain about your long stay in America for we sincerely feel that that land has afforded you a large and suitable field for the message of the Lord. It was there that all the priests of different religions heard first the message of the Lord, it was there the message was appreciated and reverenced.

You teach us to depend upon nobody, to have faith in ourselves, but it does not prohibit our loving you who first taught us the potency of love, by loving us with the true spiritual love, and thus widening our mind. Nothing can be harsh from you, nor anything too much from you. Hitherto the only bond that knit a few of us together was that of the material gravitation, of the flesh, but now we feel the existence of another elastic chord which is capable of binding together the whole universe within its sweet and exhilarating grip and which is only hidden for all external appearance. To some of us at least, it is *Vivekananda*. You do not care for anything of the world. You are now in America, you know the Americans and you love them, but we are still of the world, we know not anything of the outside world and so we might in our over-anxiety for you write or do something nonsensical; but the only way in which we console ourselves is by thinking as Kidi would put it, "Whatever is, is right."

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In spite of all our efforts and in spite of all that we imagine we can we are at times led to feel that we are the blind in a forest, an empty vessel in a stormy sea, a kite without the flying string. And so we appeal to you now and then. No! We can not go anywhere else even though you spurn us away—We cannot but stick to you like bur. Do you not love us—Are we not still ignorant children, in need of a guide? How can we rest till we see the Lord? I am afraid I am growing stupid and troublesome.

I already alluded in our last letters to you that everything that you do there rebounds to India with a greater force. Everybody here now feels Religion in the air. Some of the missionaries here the friends of the degraded Heathen just now seem to have risen from their dream, and feel the atmosphere insalubrious and after wisely tracing everything home to you, have begun to hurl their lances at you from here across the seas. Alasinga sent you by the last a review of an article by a missionary one Hudson in the Xian College magazine. The same votary of Christ has launched another letter in the Calcutta "Statesman," which purports to say that the appreciation of Vivekananda by the Americans was chiefly due to his flowing robe and orange turban. The Editor of the "Madras Times," a European, has reviewed it in an editorial which is herewith sent.

The sashtanga pranamas of all our Madras friends to Swamiji.

Very affectionately ever Swamiji
G. G. Narasimhacharya

Dear Swamiji,

Being too deeply immersed in college work I allowed myself the privilege of not writing my lengthy letter this week for which I have no doubt you will excuse me as it has been much better done this week by G. G. However much we may strive to believe that in the present Religious Revival we have had a hand we find that the conviction won't grow in us. We have done absolutely nothing. The credit is all due to the spiritual fire that is within you—You want us to move on. Much as we feel for the very exhaustive work you have been doing we feel we are helpless to do anything to relieve you even for a time. Your return to India will serve a double

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advantage. It will perhaps enable you to take rest as well as continue your work in your mother-country. I send you herewith a leader that appeared in a European Daily here reviewing a missionary's criticism on your exposition of Hinduism referred to by G. G. Please don't fail to inform us before you leave America for England, and give directions to our letters being directed to you in England. Time forbids me from writing more. Dr., Kidi and all other friends send their pranams to you.

Very affly yours
M C Alasinga

I am sorry to inform you that there is a rumour here that Bhattacharji has been transferred to Calcutta. The gap in Madras society cannot at all be filled up. Perhaps he has done his work in Madras—that of introducing you to Madras.

MCA

Accept my adoration of your love.

Kidi

Swamiji had not intended to lecture in Washington until a week after his arrival, but on the invitation of the pastor of the People's Church, he spoke twice on Sunday, October 28, and on the same day was interviewed by a reporter from the *Washington Post,* which paper published the following article on Monday, October 29:

ONLY A HINDOO MONK

Vive Kananda Believes Not in the Tricks of the Yogis.

A Hindoo who is a member of no religious sect, who claims no knowledge or powers of occultism, who is not a believer in the miracles of the yogis, who never saw the Deliah [sic] Lama, and who does not think any more of him or of the other wonder workers of India than he does of the Christian missionaries who are working on the outskirts of the masses there, but who simply announces himself as a religious student and a teacher to the world at large, is certainly something of a rarity.

This Hindoo monk, or "swami," is Mr. Vive Kananda, now the guest of Col. Enoch Totten, of this city. Mr. Kananda

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is booked to lecture twice in Washington within the next week and a half, but he spoke twice yesterday without special announcement, before the congregation of the People's Church in the Typographical Temple. He attended the parliament of religions in Chicago during the World's Fair, and is now touring the country, lecturing and preaching in various cities. Though a member of the parliament of religions, Mr. Kananda claims no sect, calling himself simply a Hindoo, which term he uses to indicate both race and religion. His position regarding the religion of his country would be about that of a Unitarian in this country but for the fact that the Brama Sumage [Brahmo Samaj] claim the title of Hindoo Unitarians, leaving Mr. Kananda a free lance, outside the very outer wall.

All Religions Are Good.

Mr. Kananda spoke yesterday at the People's Church on the invitation of Dr. Kent, pastor of the church. His talk in the morning was a regular sermon, dealing entirely with the spiritual side of religion, and presenting the, to orthodox sects, rather original proposition that there is good in the foundation of every religion, that all religions, like languages, are descended from a common stock, and that each is good in its corporal and spiritual aspects so long as it is kept free from dogma and fossilism. The address in the afternoon was more in the form of a lecture on the Aryan race, and traced the descent of the various allied nationalities by their language, religion and customs from the common Sanskrit stock.

After the meeting, to a Post reporter Mr. Kananda said: "I claim no affiliation with any religious sect, but occupy the position of an observer, and so far as I may, of a teacher to mankind. All religion to me is good. About the higher mysteries of life and existence I can do no more than speculate, as others do. Reincarnation seems to me to be the nearest to a logical explanation for many things with which we are confronted in the realm of religion. But I do not advance it as a doctrine. It is no more than a theory at best, and is not susceptible of proof except by personal experience, and that proof is good only for the man who has it. Your experience is nothing to me, nor mine to you. I am not

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a believer in miracles—they are repugnant to me in matters of religion. You might bring the world tumbling down about my ears, but that would be no proof to me that there was a God, or that you worked by his agency, if there was one.

He Believes It Blindly.

"I must, however, believe in a past and a hereafter as necessary to the existence of the present. And if we go on from here, we must go in other forms, and so comes my belief in reincarnation. But I can prove nothing, and any one is welcome to deprive me of the theory of reincarnation provided they will show me something better to replace it. Only up to the present I have found nothing that offers so satisfactory an explanation to me."

Mr. Kananda is a native of Calcutta, and a graduate of the government university there. He speaks English like a native, having received his university training in that tongue. He has had good opportunity to observe the contact between the natives and the English, and it would disappoint a foreign missionary worker to hear him speak in very unconcerned style of the attempts to convert the natives. In this connection he was asked what effect the Western teaching was having on the thought of the Orient.

"Of course," he said, "no thought of any sort can come into a country without having its effect, but the effect of Christian teaching on Oriental thought is, if it exists, so small as to be imperceptible. The Western doctrines have made about as much impression there as have the Eastern doctrines here, perhaps not so much. That is, among the higher thinkers of the country. The effect of the missionary work among the masses is imperceptible. When converts are made they of course drop at once out of the native sects, but the mass of the population is so great that the converts of the missionaries have very little effect that can be seen."

The Yogis Are Jugglers.

When asked whether he knew anything of the alleged miraculous performances of the yogis and adepts Mr. Kananda replied that he was not interested in miracles, and that while there were of course a great many clever jugglers in the

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country, their performances were tricks. Mr. Kananda said that he had seen the mango trick but once, and then by a fakir on a small scale. He held the same view about the alleged attainments of the lamas. "There is a great lack of trained, scientific, and unprejudiced observers in all accounts of these phenomena," said he, "so that it is hard to select the false from the true."

Mr. Kananda will remain in Washington till Thursday, when he lectures at Metzerott Hall on "Reincarnation," and after a short visit to New York will return to speak on "Gods of all nations" on the following Tuesday.

The last paragraph of the above article is misleading, for Swamiji did not make a short visit to New York after his lecture in Washington; rather, as we can deduce from a published letter which he wrote to Mary Hale, he revisited Baltimore, where he lectured on November 2 and 5, and returned to Washington on Tuesday, November 6. Unfortunately, the Washington lectures, "Reincarnation" (November 1) and "Gods of All Nations" (November 6), as well as the two Baltimore lectures, were not covered by the newspapers and are therefore lost to us.

It can be mentioned, however, that while Swamiji was lecturing in Baltimore and Washington, Christian missionary societies throughout the country were holding their annual meetings. "The reports of most of the conferences thus far heard from," writes the *Methodist Protestant* of October 10, "show a decided falling off in receipts for Foreign Missions." In view of this disconcerting fact and in view of Swamiji's presence, it is not surprising that in both Baltimore and Washington much stress was laid by the missionaries upon their achievement in India. As reported in the papers, their meetings seemed concerned with little else. In one news item the sacred city of Muttra and its surrounding towns were said to have been entirely converted to Christianity. Another stated: "18 Brahmins, or high caste Indians [have] accepted Christianity, [which fact] effectively contradicts the statement published on Brahministic authority, that no Brahmin had ever been converted to Christianity." The *Baltimore Sun* of October 17 ran an article which was headlined: "The Christian Religion—President Bonney Says That The Parliament of Religions Will Make it Supreme." Was Bonney, the president of the Parliament, whom Swamiji had so admired, now regretting his dream of religious

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fraternity? It would appear so. At any rate, it is certain that the outcome of the Parliament was, to say the least, an unexpected one, and it is equally certain that the cause of the upset was clear to everyone. Indeed, wherever Swamiji went there was a background of muttering, audible behind the applause and punctuated from time to time by shrill cries—as in Detroit, and again, as will be seen later, in Brooklyn.

"I shall be in Philadelphia a few days only to see Prof. Wright," Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale from Washington, "and then I go to New York and run for a little while between New York and Boston, and then go to Chicago *via* Detroit ; and then 'whist'—as Senator Palmer says, to England." (This letter, which is published in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" [No. XXIX], is undated, but one can gather from its contents that it was written on November 1.) Swamiji left Washington for Philadelphia on November 7, but his whereabouts after that until December 5 are at present unknown. We can only surmise that, as he says, he ran for a little while between New York and Boston and also visited Chicago via Detroit. But the details of his itinerary during this period must be left to future research.

It is probable, however, that Swamiji spent a good part of November in New York City and probable, also, that it was during this month that he organized a society there. On November 30 he wrote to Alasinga: "I have already established a society in New York. The vice-president of the society will soon write to you. Please start correspondence with them as soon as you can. I hope I shall be able to start such societies in several other places." Although we do not know at present either the name or the nature of this society, it was very likely formed with a mixed purpose. As early as July 11 Swamiji had written to Alasinga, "When the cold weather comes and people return to their homes, I shall begin lecturing again, and at the same time organize societies." The purpose of the societies Swamiji had in mind at that time was no doubt more financial than philosophical and religious, for we find him writing on August 31 to the same disciple: "I have friends here who take care of all my monetary concerns. . . . It will be a wonderful relief to me to get rid of horrid money affairs. So the sooner you organize yourselves and you be ready as secretary and treasurer to enter into direct communication with my friends and sympathizers here, the better for you and me." The New York society which Swamiji formed in November was no doubt organized partly in pursuance of this plan. But, as will be seen in

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MRS. OLE BULL'S RESIDENCE, CAMBRIDGE

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a later chapter, toward the end of 1894 he was also becoming keenly aware of America's need for the religion of India; thus the society was probably concerned also with the religious and philosophical aspects of his work.

December 5 finds Swamiji once again at Mrs. Bull's home in Cambridge, where he stayed until December 28. These three Cambridge weeks were important ones in his work in America, for during them he held large classes every morning in Mrs. Bull's ample parlor. A bulletin announcing his Brooklyn lectures, which will be reproduced later, commented upon these classes as follows:

> One who has attended the Cambridge Classes of the SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, writes: "He has helped many students (in Harvard University) in the solution of philosophical problems in which they had become involved in their course of study."

The Cambridge Classes were, in a sense, a prelude to what were, perhaps, the greatest intellectual honors paid to Swamiji in America—that of being invited to speak before the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University on March 25, 1896, and, after his talk there on "The Vedanta Philosophy," of being offered the chair in Eastern Philosophy—a position which he declined.

A little more information regarding Swamiji's activities in Cambridge in December, 1894, comes from a published letter he wrote to Mary Hale, who was at the time in Boston and who was apparently reluctant to meet Swamiji's Cambridge friends. "I have a class every morning here on Vedanta and other topics . . .," he writes. "I went to dine with the Spaldings another day. That day they urged me, against my repeated protests, to criticize the Americans. I am afraid they did not relish it. It is of course always impossible to do it. . . . I would have run into town to see you before this, had I time. I am kept pretty busy the whole day. Then there is the fear of not meeting you. If you have time you may write and I shall snatch the first opportunity to see you. My time of course is always in the afternoon; so long I shall be here, that is until the 27th or 28th of this month, I will have to be very busy in the morning till 12 or 1."

Again he writes: "I received your letter just now. If it is not against the rules of your society, why do you not come to see Mrs. Ole Bull, Miss Farmer and Mrs. Adams the physical culturist from Chicago?

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Any day you will find them there." But although Mrs. Bull personally sent Mary Hale an invitation to visit her, Mary Hale remained aloof. It was not until March of 1895 that these two close friends of Swamiji met.

One of Swamiji's lectures in Cambridge particularly impressed the women to whom he spoke. As it is told in "The Life," Swamiji delivered at the request of Mrs. Bull a lecture on "The Ideals of Indian Women." He dwelt on the nobility and beauty of the Hindu women and on the high regard in which they, as mothers, were held. At the end he saluted his own mother to whose unselfish love and purity he owed, he said, all that he had been able to accomplish in this world. This picture of Hindu women—so different from that painted by the missionaries and others—deeply stirred the women of Cambridge and Boston. Unknown to Swamiji they sent to his mother a picture of the Virgin Mary and Child accompanied by a letter of profound salutations and respect. Remembering how keenly Swamiji felt for his mother, this tribute, of all his triumphs, perhaps gave him, when he heard of it, the deepest personal joy.

In a letter to Mary Hale written on Friday, December 21, Swamiji says, "I am going away next Tuesday [Christmas Day] to New York." It is possible that he meant "Thursday," but if he had indeed planned to travel on Christmas Day, he was probably persuaded to postpone his trip until the twenty-eighth, for it was on that date that he arrived in New York to keep an appointment with the officers of the Brooklyn Ethical Association.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE LAST BATTLE

I

"I arrived safely in New York and proceeded at once to Brooklyn where I arrived in time," Swamiji writes to Mrs. Ole Bull on Friday, December 28—the function for which he arrived in time being an evening reception given him by Mr. Charles M. Higgins on that same Friday. "We had a nice evening," Swamiji continues. "Several gentlemen belonging to the Ethical Culture Society came to see me. . . . Dr. Janes was as usual very kind and good and Mr. Higgins is as practical as ever."

The Brooklyn Ethical Association, which is what Swamiji meant by "the Ethical Culture Society," was founded in 1885 with Dr. Lewis G. Janes as its president. Because of Janes' frequent lectures on the subject, the Association soon became known as a defender of evolutionary views and an exponent of Herbert Spencer's system of philosophy, ethics and sociology. Janes, largely self-educated, was an ardent and excellent scholar, devoted to the spirit of free inquiry. He later became director of the Monsalvat School of Comparative Religion at Greenacre, and later still, in 1899, was elected president of the Free Religious Association, upon the retirement of Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. "[Janes] and I agree so much," Swamiji had written from Greenacre, but whether Janes agreed entirely with Swamiji's metaphysics, which left the Spencerian doctrine of evolution far behind, is open to question. His mind, however, was broad and flexile enough to weigh carefully any viewpoint earnestly and rationally held, and when his support was needed he was to become one of Swamiji's most loyal and articulate champions.

Of Mr. Charles M. Higgins little is known at present, except that he was one of the officers of the Brooklyn Ethical Association and in November of 1894 had had a ten-page pamphlet printed about Swamiji, which he distributed, as the title page tells, "among those interested in the study of Oriental Religions." This pamphlet, which has recently come into our hands, was well prepared and consists of articles regarding

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Swamiji taken from both American and Indian newspapers, some of which have already been quoted in the course of this narrative. Under what circumstances Mr. Higgins had it printed is not known, for as yet we know almost nothing of Swamiji's life during the most part of November, 1894. Perhaps Mr. Higgins, being a practical man, distributed the pamphlet as a sort of forerunner to Swamiji's coming lectures at the Brooklyn Ethical Association. In any case, it stands as evidence of the regard in which Swamiji's friends held him.

Mr. Higgins, "practical as ever," evidently invited a reporter from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* to his reception for Swamiji; for on December 30, 1894, that paper ran the following article, which was accompanied by a line drawing of Swamiji in his turban:

VISIT OF A HINDOO MONK

To Lecture To-morrow on Vedic Philosophy

He Comes to Brooklyn at the Request of the Ethical Society, and Last Night was Given a Reception at the Residence Of Charles M. Higgins.

The Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, who has been well known in this country since the time of the world fair, when he attended the congress of religions, arrived in this city on Friday from Boston. He has accepted an invitation from Charles M. Higgins of 499 Fourth street to lecture before the Brooklyn Ethical society, the admission to which will be free to all. In order that his guest might become acquainted with some of Brooklyn's well known people and the members of the society before which he is to lecture Mr. Higgins gave an informal reception at his home in Fourth street Friday night. Among the people there were William C. Burling, Abram H. Dailey, Delmore Elwell, Dr. Lewis G. Janes, Dr. Charles H. Shepard, Mrs. Charles H. Shepard, Miss Shepard, James A. Skilton, Miss Mary Phillips, H. W. Phillips and Professor Landsbery [Landsberg] of New York. The reception was entirely informal. The people who were there talked on various topics, but the chief one discussed was that in which the monk was most deeply interested, the philosophy

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of the Vedic religions. He explained many points which had previously been a mystery to his hearers as a foretaste of his lecture at the Pouch gallery to-morrow evening.

Of Swami Vivekananda, an Indian admirer [G. G. Narasimhachariar of Madras] observes: "The first that strikes you when you look at his calm and pleasant face is his eyes, which are large and brilliant, and whenever he gets enthusiastic over anything, they roll and shed a peculiar luster. He would not say anything about himself, and all that I am able to tell you now about his early life is what I gleaned from respectable persons who knew him from his infancy. He is a man of about 32 or 33 years of age. He belongs to a respectable family in Bengal and is a graduate of the Calcutta university. His secular name was Norendra Nath Dutta. In his younger days, unlike other youths of his age, he showed a strong inclination for spiritual things. He would never pass the Salvation army marching in the streets of Calcutta, or a Brahmo Samaj congregation without joining them and chanting their chorus. He was very fond of frequenting holy places and talking to holy personages. His 20th year marks an epoch of his life, when, on the death of his father, he became a sanyasi (monk), under the illustrious Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. He lived with the Paramahamsa for a period and, after his death, he took to traveling. He lived on the Himalayas for some time, and, after traveling on foot to Thibet and other places, he returned to India. He used to speak occasionally of the sublime sceneries and the eternal snow regions of the Himalayas, and say that while there he first acquired calmness of mind. After ten or twelve years [?] of such a life, he took a vow to travel the whole of India and not to touch metal. It was during this trip that many of us became acquainted with him. It was by fortuitous concurrence of circumstances that we met him. We met him at a time when many of our young men at Madras were absorbed in their fashionable thoughts of the day, at a time when they had no proper idea of their own selves and their mission in this world. It was a godsend to many of them that they met one so full of spirituality that even a short contact with him made them turn over a new leaf in their lives. They found in him a wonderful

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combination of religious orthodoxy and social radicalism, Western scholarship and Eastern spiritual wisdom. He claimed equal rank both with the Pandits and with the professors. His discourses on any subject were interesting, but on a religious question, non pareil. Sri Paramahamsa Ramakrishna is said to have once observed that Norendra Nath had in him both the spirit of divine knowledge and the spirit of divine love highly developed. Nobody who came in contact with him escaped the magic influence of his heart. The happiness which one felt in his company was not a mere gratification of the intellect, but it transcended all emotions of the heart. I am not competent enough, gentlemen, to pass an opinion on his knowledge. But this much I can say, that his eloquent course on the teachings of Krishna turned many a man into a statue. He preached a wonderful religion of harmony. He taught that the Vedas should be studied through the spectacle of evolution; that they contain the whole history of the process of religion until religion has reached its perfection in unity—Advaitism; and that no new religious idea is preached anywhere which is not found in the Vedas, which teach from Agnimida [Agnimide] to Tatsah [Tat Sat]. To him the seeming contradictions and conflicting teachings of the Vedas are all true as describing portions of the one Infinite Reality; and Hinduism, where one passes from truth to truth, and not from error to truth as in other religions, was the religion of religions. He defined God as the apex of the triangle of creation and drew a sharp line between God and Brahman."

Swamiji's first lecture sponsored by the Ethical Association was given at what was known as the Pouch Mansion. This building was on one of the wide, tree-lined avenues of Brooklyn's residential district. I visited the spot where the Pouch Mansion had once stood, hoping to find it still there, but in its place found a tall, red brick apartment building. Here and there on the same street remained large residences surrounded by spacious lawns and gardens, all of which bespoke Swamiji's era, but these too are rapidly being replaced by the ubiquitous and characterless red brick. I mention this nostalgic fact, not to decry change, but only to impress upon the reader that it was a very different scene that greeted Swamiji than greets us today. It was

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a world in which men generally moved not much faster than the trot of a horse, in which a motorman of an electric trolley—of which Brooklyn boasted—was arrested for going at the death-defying speed of twelve and a half miles an hour and in which a controversy was raging as to whether or not a revolver might be more serviceable to the cavalry than a saber or a sword.

Swamiji's first lecture in Brooklyn was reported not only by the Brooklyn papers, but by the *New York Tribune* of December 31. The following excerpt from the *Tribune* is typical of the confusion prevailing at the time regarding Hinduism:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN BROOKLYN

> The Pouch Mansion, in Brooklyn, was crowded last evening by an audience assembled to hear a lecture by Swami Vivekananda, of Bombay, upon "The Religions of India." The lecture was under the direction of the Brooklyn Ethical Association. Dr. Lewis G. Janes presided. The lecturer, who is a Hindoo monk, represented the religion of the Hindoos at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago last year. He appeared in his native garb, with a yellow turban and a scarlet robe. In the course of his lecture he expounded the Zoroastrian philosophy, founded upon the Vedas. He said that the religion of the Hindoos taught a positive something and not a negative nothing.
>
> After the address a number of questions put by A. W. Tenney, Dr. R. G. Eccles, Delmore Elwell and others were answered by Mr Vivekananda. A reception was given for him before the lecture.

Swamiji's lecture on "The Religions of India" (during which he does not seem to have expounded Zoroastrian philosophy) will not be unfamiliar to readers of "The Complete Works," for a report of it, which appeared in the *Brooklyn Standard Union* of December 31, 1894, has been reproduced in Volume I under the title, "The Hindu Religion." In early editions of "The Complete Works" the *Standard Union* report has been quoted in full, but in the latest edition one finds that the descriptive portions have been omitted. These portions have also been omitted, or at least greatly reduced, in the latest edition of "The Life." Inasmuch as the vivid picture of Swamiji painted by

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the reporter of the *Standard Union* is nowadays out of print, I am reproducing the descriptive part of the article in full, omitting the lecture proper. (It should perhaps be mentioned that this lecture can be found not only in Volume I of "The Complete Works" but in Volume IV as well, under the title, "Indian Religious Thought." This latter article differs in wording from the first but is in essence the same.)

RISHIS' VOICE.

The Ancient Vedas Defended by Swami Vivekananda.

An Ancient Religion of Love
With the Modern Attribute of Sciences and Philosophy—
The Migration of the Soul and Individual Divinity

"All Kinds of Religions Must be True."

It was the voice of the ancient Rishis of the Vedas speaking sweet words of love and toleration through the Hindoo monk Paramhamsa Swami Vivekananda, that held spellbound last evening every one of those many hundreds who had accepted the invitation of the Brooklyn Ethical Society and packed the large lecture hall and the adjoining rooms of the Pouch Gallery on Clinton avenue to overflowing.

The fame of the Oriental ascetic, who came to this Western world as the emissary and representative of the most ancient form of philosophical religious worship, Buddhism, had preceded him, and as a result men of all professions and callings—doctors and lawyers and judges and teachers—together with many ladies, had come from all parts of the city to listen to his strangely beautiful and eloquent defense of the "Religions of India." They had heard of him as the delegate of the worshipers of Krishna and Brahma and Buddha to the "Parliament of Religions" at the World's Fair in Chicago, where he had been the most honored of all pagan representatives; they had read of him as the philosopher who, for the sake of his religion, had given up what promised to be a most brilliant career, who, by years of ardent and

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patient study, had taken the scientific culture of the West and had transplanted it to the mystic soil of the ancient tradition of the Hindus ; they had heard of his culture and his learning, of his wit and his eloquence, of his purity and sincerity and holiness, and hence they expected great things.

And they were not disappointed. "Swami" i.e., Master or Rabbi or Teacher Vivekananda is even greater than his fame. As he stood, last night, upon the dias in his picturesque kafftan of bright red, a stray curl of jet-black hair creeping from under the many folds of his orange turban, his swarthy face reflecting the brilliancy of his thoughts, his large, expressive eyes, bright with the enthusiasm of a prophet, and his mobile mouth uttering, in deep melodious tones and in almost perfect English, only words of love and sympathy and toleration, he was a splendid type of the famous sages of the Himalayas, a prophet of a new religion, combining the morality of the Christians with the philosophy of the Buddhists, and his hearers understood why, on Sept. 4, 1894, a crowded mass meeting at Calcutta was held for the sole purpose of "publicly recording the grateful appreciation of his countrymen for his great services rendered to the cause of Hinduism."

Whatever else may be said of the Swami's lecture or address (for it was spoken extemporaneously), it was certainly intensely interesting. After thanking the audience cordially for the hearty reception it had given him after his introduction by Dr. Janes, the president of the Ethical Association, Swami Vivekananda said in part: [Here follows the report of Swamiji's lecture which can be found in Volume I of "The Complete Works" under the title, "The Hindu Religion." The article ended with the following paragraph:]

The speaker was frequently and heartily applauded. At the end of his lecture he devoted some fifteen minutes to answering questions, after which he held an informal reception.

The December 31 issues of the *Brooklyn Times* and the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* also contain lengthy reports of this same lecture. They vary somewhat from the report in the *Standard Union* and read, respectively, as follows:

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BROOKLYN ETHICAL ASSOCIATION

Addressed by Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo Monk.

The Brooklyn Ethical Association, at the Pouch Gallery last night, tendered a reception to Swami Vivekananda, of Bombay, the Hindoo monk who first came into prominence in this country, as the representative of the religion of the Hindus, at the Congress of Religions, at Chicago, during the World's Fair.

Previous to the reception the distinguished visitor delivered a remarkably interesting lecture on "The Religions of India." The interest excited by Swami Vivekananda and his lecture, was shown in the numbers present. The rooms were crowded to suffocation. Long before the commencement of the lecture, all the seats [a line omitted here by the printer] was a luxury, by the time the visitor from the far East began to talk.

Swami Vivekananda made his appearance last night in his native Eastern costume. He is a heavily built man of medium stature, with a bright, handsome face and dark, flashing eyes, and when he smiles he reveals two rows of even, white teeth. Last night he wore a turban, and a bright scarlet cloak enveloped his form clear down to his feet. He speaks English fluently. He delivered his lecture in a sort of monotone which was not at all unpleasant. He speaks with an earnestness that seems to carry conviction with his words. Among other things he said:

"The Hindoo's view of life is that we are here to learn; the whole happiness of life is to learn; the human soul is here to love learning and get experience. I am able to read my Bible better by your Bible, and you will learn to read your Bible the better by my Bible. If there is but one religion to be true, all the rest must be true. The same truth has manifested itself in different forms, and the forms are according to the different circumstances of the physical or mental nature of the different nations.

"If matter and its transformation answer for all that we have, there is no necessity for supposing the existence of

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a soul. But it can [not] be proven that thought has been evolved out of matter. We can not deny that bodies inherit certain tendencies, but those tendencies only mean the physical configuration through which a peculiar mind alone can act in a peculiar way. These peculiar tendencies in that soul have been caused by past actions. A soul with a certain tendency will take birth in a body which is the fittest instrument for the display of that tendency, by the laws of affinity. And this is in perfect accord with science, for science wants to explain everything by habit, and habit is got through repetitions. So these repetitions are also necessary to explain the natural habits of a new-born soul. They were not got in this present life; therefore, they must have come down from past lives.

"All religions are so many stages. Each one of them represents the stage through which the human soul passes to realize God. Therefore, not one of them should be neglected. None of the stages are dangerous or bad. They are good. Just as a child becomes a young man, and a young man becomes an old man, so they are traveling from truth to truth; they become dangerous only when they become rigid, and will not move further—when he ceases to grow. If the child refuses to become a young man, or a young man refuses to become an old man, then he is diseased, but if they steadily grow, each step will lead them onward until they reach the whole truth. Therefore, we believe in both a personal and impersonal God, and at the same time we believe in all the religions that were, all the religions that are, and all the religions that will be in the world. We also believe we ought not only tolerate these religions, but to accept them.

"In the material physical world, expansion is life, and contraction is death. Whatever ceases to expand ceases to live. Translating this in the moral world we have: If one would expand, he must love, and when he ceases to love he dies. It is your nature; you must, because that is the only law of life. Therefore, we must love God for love's sake, so we must do our duty for duty's sake; we must work for work's sake without looking for any reward—know that you are purer and more perfect, know that this is the real temple of God."

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He closed his lecture with a series of arguments showing that religion is based upon experience.

At the conclusion of the lecture, Swami Vivekananda answered questions pertinent to his subject, which were propounded by members of the association.

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

Lecture by Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu Monk.

He Addressed a Large Audience under the Auspices of the Ethical Society. In a Picturesque Garb He Discusses the Tenets of the Ancient Vedas.

A large audience gathered in the Pouch mansion last evening to listen to a lecture by Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, on "The Religions of India." The gallery, the parlor adjoining and the hall were filled to overflowing, many of the audience standing throughout the entire lecture. The speaker was introduced by Dr. Lewis G. Janes, president of the Brooklyn Ethical association, under whose auspices the lecture was given. He wore a bright red robe, reaching just below the knee and bound at the waist with a girdle of darker red. On his head was a turban of light yellow silk. He is a man of medium height, of stout build, and his face, which is rather swarthy in color, was cleanly shaven. His eyes are dark and large and his features regular. His voice is low and musical. He spoke in a monotone and his language was marked with a slight foreign accent.

After referring to the views of the Mohammedans, the Budhists and other religious schools of India, the speaker said that the Hindoos received their religion through the revelations of the Vedas, who teach that creation is without beginning or end. They teach that man is a spirit living in a body. The body will die, but the man will not. The spirit will go on living. The soul was not created from nothing for creation means a combination and that means a certain future dissolution. If then the soul was created it must die.

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Therefore, it was not created. He might be asked how it is that we do not remember anything of our past lives. This could be easily explained. Consciousness is the name only of the surface of the mental ocean, and within its depths are stored up all our experiences. The desire was to find out something that was stable. The mind, the body, all nature, in fact, is changing. This question of finding something that was infinite had long been discussed. One school of which the modern Buddhists are the representatives, teach that everything that could not be solved by the five senses was non-existent. That every object is dependent upon all others, that it is a delusion that man is an independent entity. The idealists, on the other hand, claim that each individual is an independent body. The true solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of dependence and independence, of reality and idealism. There is a dependence which is proved by the fact that the movements of our bodies are controlled by our minds, and our minds are controlled by the spirit within us, which Christians call the soul. Death is but a change. Those who have passed beyond and are occupying high positions there are but the same as those who remain here, and those who are occupying lower positions there are the same as others here. Every human being is a perfect being. If we sit down in the dark and lament that it is so dark it will profit us nothing, but if we procure matches and strike a light, the darkness goes out immediately. So, if we sit down and lament that our bodies are imperfect, that our souls are imperfect, we are not profited. When we call in the light of reason, then this darkness of doubt will disappear. The object of life is to learn. Christians can learn from the Hindus, and the Hindus from Christians. He could read his Bible better after reading ours. "Tell your children," he said, "that religion is a positive something, and not a negative something. It is not the teachings of men, but a growth, a development of something higher within our nature that seeks outlet. Every child born into the world is born with a certain accumulated experience. The idea of independence which possesses us shows there is something in us besides mind and body. The body and mind are dependent. The soul that animates us is an independent factor that creates this

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wish for freedom. If we are not free how can we hope to make the world good or perfect? We hold that we are makers of ourselves, that what we have we make ourselves. We have made it and we can unmake it. We believe in God, the Father of us all, the Creator and Preserver of His children, omnipresent and omnipotent. We believe in a personal God, as you do, but we go further. We believe that we are He. We believe in all the religions that have gone before, in all that now exist and in all that are to come. The Hindu bows down to the all religion [sic] for in this world the idea is addition, not subtraction. We would make up a bouquet of all beautiful colors for God, the Creator, who is a personal God. We must love God for love's sake, we must do our duty to Him for duty's sake, and must work for Him for work's sake and must worship Him for worship's sake.

"Books are good but they are only maps. Reading a book by direction of a man I read that so many inches of rain fell during the year. Then he told me to take the book and squeeze it between my hands. I did so and not a drop of water came from it. It was the idea only that the book conveyed. So we can get good from books, from the temple, from the church, from anything, so long as it leads us onward and upward. Sacrifices, genuflections, rumblings and mutterings are not religion. They are all good if they help us to come to a perception of the perfection which we shall realize when we come face to face with Christ. These are words or instructions to us by which we may profit. Columbus, when he discovered this continent, went back and told his countrymen that he had found the new world. They would not believe him, or some would not, and he told them to go and search for themselves. So with us, we read these truths and come in and find the truths for ourselves and then we have a belief which no one can take from us."

After the lecture an opportunity was given those present to question the speaker on any point on which they wished to have his views. Many of them availed themselves of this offer. In answer to a question as to the origin of evil the lecturer said he would try to answer it, if the questioner would prove the existence of evil. Devil worship, he said, was not a part of the Hindoo religion. All men were not

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equally enlightened, therefore some were better or purer than others, but every man had a chance to make himself better; we cannot unmake ourselves, we cannot destroy the force, that force which animates us, but we can give it a different direction. In reply to a question as to the individuality and the question of cosmic entity of matters [sic] about us or whether they were simply imaginings of our mind, the speaker replied by relating the story of a scholar, [who] when asked by his teacher what would happen if the earth should fall [said]: "Where would it fall to?" The world is certainly an entity in his opinion, but it mattered not whether it was or not. We are moving onward and upward. We are not individuals now. Our souls and spirits are individualities in us. When we pass from this state to the higher state and meet God face to face we shall be perfect individuals. As to the question of the blind man brought to Christ and the question asked of Him whether he or his parents sinned that he was born blind, the speaker said that while the question of sin did not enter into the problem in his mind, he was convinced that the blindness was due to some act on the part of the spirit in the man. Asked as to whether or not the spirit passed at death into a state of happiness the speaker replied: "Time and space are in you. You are not in time and space. It is enough to know that as we make our lives better here as every opportunity is given us, we come nearer and nearer to the perfect man."

A more complete version of the question and answer period which followed Swamiji's lecture of December 30 has been published in Volume V of "The Complete Works" in the section entitled "Questions and Answers." It will be found that Swamiji was also asked: "What is the Hindu theory of the transmigration of souls?" "Why are the women of India not much elevated?" "Do you not think if the fear of future hell-fire were taken from man, there would be no controlling him?" "Do you intend to introduce the practices and rituals of the Hindu religion into this country?" (To this last he answered: "I am preaching simply philosophy.") It was during the course of this discussion that, in addition to giving succinct answers to all the questions asked, Swamiji first made his now famous statement: "I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East." (A year

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later an identical statement was quoted in an article on Swamiji published in the *New York Herald* of January 19, 1896.)

II

In a letter to Mrs. Bull, which I shall reproduce in full later on, Swamiji wrote of the success of his first lecture in Brooklyn: "Some [of the prominent members of the Ethical Society] thought that such Oriental religious subjects will not interest the Brooklyn public. But the lecture through the blessings of the Lord proved a tremendous success. About 800 of the elite of Brooklyn were present and the very gentlemen who thought it would not prove a success are trying for organizing a series in Brooklyn." Of Swamiji's immediate success in Brooklyn Miss Ellen Waldo, who later became one of his most devoted disciples, writes in her "Introductory Narrative" to "Inspired Talks": "The lecture was on 'Hinduism' and as the Swami, in his long robe and turban, expounded the ancient religion of his native land, the interest grew so deep that at the close of the evening there was an insistent demand for regular classes in Brooklyn. The Swami graciously acceded and a series of class meetings was held and several public lectures were given in the Pouch Mansion and elsewhere." Announcing the series of public lectures, the Brooklyn Ethical Association sent out the following bulletin:

Brooklyn Ethical Association

LECTURES BY
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,
of India,
Pouch Gallery, 345 Clinton Avenue,
Near Lafayette Avenue.

Religious and Social Customs in India.

Sunday Evening, January 20th, 1895:
Ideals of Womanhood,—Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian.

Sunday Evening, February 3d, 1895:
Buddhism as understood in India.

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Sunday Evening, February 17th, 1895:

The Vedas and Religion of the Hindus. What is Idolatry?

COMMENCING AT 8 P.M.

COURSE TICKETS, $1.00 SINGLE ADMISSION, 50 Cents.

These Lectures are for the joint benefit of the Swami Vivekananda's Educational Work, and the Publication Fund of the Ethical Association.

THE BROOKLYN ETHICAL ASSOCIATION takes pleasure in announcing that it has engaged the services of the distinguished and eloquent Hindu Monk, SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, of Bombay, India, for a series of lectures on the important topics above specified. The profound interest which has been awakened in our city by the address of the lecturer before the Association at the Pouch Gallery, on the evening of Sunday, December 30, has aroused a general and widespread desire to hear further from this able apostle of Hinduism, of the Vedas, and the Philosophy of the Vedanta, not only upon subjects religious and philosophical, but upon the phases of modern life now presented in India. Upon all these topics the lecturer speaks with authority. He is, by birth and education, deeply imbued with the profound mysteries of the Brahman faith, than which no more interesting and profoundly suggestive system has yet been offered in the history of speculative thought. His views upon comparative religion are those of the universal acceptance of all creeds and beliefs as essentially true, and to be interpreted as necessary phases of the religious sentiment. We reprint the following from his address before the Parliament of Religions: [Here follows an excerpt regarding the unity of religions from Swamiji's "Paper on Hinduism" and, following that, a quotation from the *Brooklyn Standard Union* of December 31, 1894. An announcement at the end of the bulletin read:]

Tickets for sale at Chandler's, at the Pouch Gallery on the evenings of the Lectures, or may be obtained of Members of the Association.

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(To avoid confusion later it should be mentioned here that the above schedule of lectures was subsequently changed. The third lecture, "The Vedas and Religion of the Hindus. What is Idolatry?" which was scheduled for February 17, did not, as far as is known, take place. In its stead Swamiji lectured on "India's Gift to The World" on Monday evening, February 25. As will be seen later on, in addition to these three lectures, he gave in Brooklyn two "parlor lectures" and, on April 7, a final lecture at the Pouch Mansion on "Some Customs of the Hindus: What They Mean and How They Are Misinterpreted.")

According to the above bulletin, three weeks elapsed between Swamiji's first lecture in Brooklyn and his second of January 20, 1895. As will be seen later, he spent these weeks in Chicago where he visited the Hale family. (The reader should be cautioned in this connection not to be misled by a letter to Mrs. Bull which has been published in "The Letters" and which is dated January 24, 1895. The letter reads in part: "Tomorrow will be the last Sunday lecture of this month. The first Sunday of next month there will be a lecture in Brooklyn; the rest, three in New York, with which I will close this year's New York lectures." This would indicate that Swamiji was holding public lectures almost every Sunday in New York throughout the first two months of 1895. There is every reason to believe, however, that this letter is erroneously dated. First, its program of activities coincides precisely with that of the early part of 1896. Second, Swamiji mentions in this letter that he is going to Boston at the end of March and to England in April. Both these trips he made in 1896. Third, he says, "I have worked my best. . . . I am also getting tired of lecturing and having classes." On January 24, 1895, Swamiji's classes had not yet begun. Fourth, the general tone as well as the context of the letter belongs more to 1896 than to 1895. I believe, therefore, it can be safely stated that there has somewhere been a mistake. Either Swamiji misdated his letter—as one is apt to do in the early part of a new year—or the editors misread his numerals. Furthermore, this letter was obviously written on a Saturday. In neither 1895 nor 1896 did Saturday fall on January 24; the last Saturday of January, 1895, was the 26th, and that of 1896, the 25th. Thus, to judge from internal evidence, the correct date of this letter should be January 25, 1896. While discussing the dates of Swamiji's letters I should like also to point out that in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works" there are two letters to Mary Hale dated, respectively, January 6, 1895, and

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February 10, 1895. Both these letters, as the reader may quickly verify for himself, pertain to the early part of 1896, after Swamiji had been to England.)

To judge from his enthusiastic reception in Brooklyn, the time, on the whole, was ripe for receiving his message. Compared to the Midwest, the East Coast was broad-minded. Moreover, few dared openly oppose Swamiji, whose fame had traveled so widely, who was revered by so many American men and women of high intellectual and social standing, who had been officially recognized by India as the most outstanding representative of her highest religious and philosophical thought, and who was known by now as a power to be respected. The direct opposition from the Christian missionary camps had been silenced. It must be said, however, that indirectly the orthodox clergy was still active in its efforts to nullify his influence.

There was, for instance, one Reverend Dr. T. De Witt Talmage of Brooklyn, who was taking a trip around the world and, through a series of newspaper articles mailed from India, was enlightening America regarding the superstition and sin of heathendom. The Reverend Dr. Talmage's "Round-the-World" series ran through December of 1894 and into January of 1895 and was published not alone in Brooklyn but in other cities as well. A few excerpts from Talmage's weekly articles will suffice to show what kind of thing the American people were being fed. Talmage, who was, incidentally, immensely popular, wrote as follows: "To show you what Hinduism and Mohammedanism really are, where they have full swing, and not as they represent themselves in a 'Parliament of Religions' and to demonstrate to what extent of cruelty and abomination human nature may go when fully let loose, and to illustrate the hardening process of sin, and to remind you how our glorious Christianity may utter its triumph over death and the grave, I preach this my second sermon in the 'Round-the-World' series, and I shall speak of 'The City of Blood,' or Cawnpore, India." "The life of the missionary is a luxurious and indolent life. Hindooism is a religion that ought not to be interfered with. Christianity is guilty of an impertinence when it invades heathendom; you must put in the same line of reverence Brahma, Buddha, Mohammed and Christ. To refute these slanders and blasphemies now so prevalent, and to spread out before the Christian world the contrast between idolatrous and Christian countries, I preach this sermon . . ." "The Ganges is to the Hindoo the best river of all the earth, but to me it is the vilest stream that ever rolled

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its stench in horror to the sea. . . . Benares is the capital of Hindooism and Buddhism. But Hindooism has trampled out Buddhism, the hoof of the one monster on the grisly neck of the other monster. It is also the capital of filth and the capital of malodors, and the capital of indecency." "Notwithstanding all that may have been said in its [Hinduism's] favor at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, it makes a man a brute, and woman the lowest type of slave. I would rather be a horse or a cow or a dog in India than be a woman. The greatest disaster that can happen to a Hindoo is that he was born at all."

Thus did Talmage, week after week, in column after column, share his travels with his public. Nor did he leave them without hope:

". . . the missionaries are busy," he wrote, "some of them in the churches, in chapels, and bazaars. . . . In its mightiest stronghold [Banaras] Hindooism is being assaulted. . . . Christianity is undermining heathenism, and not a city or town, or neighborhood of India but directly or indirectly feels the influence, and the day speeds on when Hindooism will go down with a crash. . . . All India will be taken for Christ." ". . . all the mosques and temples of superstition and sin will yet be turned into churches. . . . The last mosque of Mohammedanism will be turned into a Christian Church. The last Buddhist temple will become a fortress of light. The last idol of Hindooism will be pitched into the fire."

This type of thing was in the nature of a last stand on the part of the Christian missionaries, and it is perhaps significant that the Rev. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage had been for several months out of touch with the trend of thought in America. He was fighting a battle already lost, for, as Swamiji wrote to India in the last part of 1894: "Here the missionaries and their ilk have howled themselves into silence and the whole world will do likewise."

There was, however, one more battle to be waged between Swamiji and the missionaries' ilk, who found it their Christian duty to malign India in the name of "helping" her and who were thrown off balance by any word in her favor. In Brooklyn, bitter opposition from a new source was aroused by the report of Swamiji's second lecture sponsored by the Brooklyn Ethical Association. This lecture, "Ideals of Womanhood—Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian," was delivered at the Pouch Mansion on Sunday evening, January 20, and was reported by the *Standard Union* of January 21, as follows:

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IDEAL WOMAN

She is the Wife in the West, the Mother in the Orient.

Story of Umar and Shiver [Uma and Shiva]

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu Monk, Speaks to A Large Audience at the Pouch Mansion—The Perfect Woman a Mixture of All Ideals, Perhaps the Remedy of All Evils.

Swami Vivekananda, the celebrated Hindu monk, somewhat disappointed the large audience which had assembled last night at the Pouch Mansion, on Clinton avenue, to hear his lecture on "Ideals of Womanhood—Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian," the first in a course of three given under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Association.

Not that the discourse was uninteresting—far from that; but Swami Vivekananda seemed to digress too often into subjects only distantly related to the theme proper, thereby mystifying and confusing his hearers. Still, the lecture contained so many beautiful thoughts, so many noble truths, so many bright pictures of the customs and conditions of a race so wholly different from our own, that no one can regret the two hours spent last night at the feet of this Oriental philosopher and sage. Swami Vivekananda, after being presented to the audience by Dr. Janes, president of the Ethical Association, said in part:

"The product of the slums of any nation cannot be the criterion of our judgment of that nation. One may collect the rotten, worm-eaten apples under every apple tree in the world, and write a book about each of them, and still know nothing of the beauty and possibilities of the apple tree. Only in the highest and best can we judge a nation—the fallen are a race by themselves. Thus it is not only proper, but just and right, to judge a custom by its best, by its ideal.

"The ideal of womanhood centres in the Arian race of India, the most ancient in the world's history. In that race, men and women were priests, "sabatimini [saha-dharmini]," or co-religionists, as the Vedas call them. There every family

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had its hearth or altar, on which, at the time of the wedding, the marriage fire was kindled, which was kept alive, until either spouse died, when the funeral pile was lighted from its spark. There man and wife together offered their sacrifices, and this idea was carried so far that a man could not even pray alone, because it was held that he was only half a being, for that reason no unmarried man could become a priest. The same held true in ancient Rome and Greece.

"But with the advent of a distinct and separate priest-class, the co-priesthood of the woman in all these nations steps back. First it was the Assyrian race, coming of semitic blood, which proclaimed the doctrine that girls have no voice, and no right, even when married. The Persians drank deep of this Babylonian idea, and by them it was carried to Rome and to Greece, and everywhere woman degenerated.

"Another cause was instrumental in bringing this about —the change in the system of marriage. The earliest system was a matriarchal one; that is, one in which the mother was the centre, and in which the girls acceded to her station. This led to the curious system of the Polianders [polyandry], where five and six brothers often married one wife. Even the Vedas contain a trace of it in the provision, that when a man died without leaving any children, his widow was permitted to live with another man, until she became a mother; but the children she bore did not belong to their father, but to her dead husband. In later years the widow was allowed to marry again, which the modern idea forbids her to do.

"But side by side with these excrescences a very intense idea of personal purity sprang up in the nation. On every page the Vedas preach personal purity. The laws in this respect were extremely strict. Every boy and girl was sent to the university, where they studied until their twentieth or thirtieth year; there the least impurity was punished almost cruelly. This idea of personal purity has imprinted itself deeply into the very heart of the race, amounting almost to a mania. The most conspicuous example of it is to be found in the capture of Chito [Chitor] by the Mohammedans. The men defended the town against tremendous odds; and when the women saw that defeat was inevitable they lit a monstrous fire on the market place, and when the enemy broke down the

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gates 74,500 women jumped on the huge funeral pile and perished in the flames. This noble example has been handed down in India to the present time, when every letter bears the words "74,500," which means that any one who unlawfully reads the letter, thereby becomes guilty of a crime similar to the one which drove those noble women of Chito to their death.

"The next period is that of the monks; it came with the advent of Buddhism, which taught that only the monks could reach the 'nirvana,' something similar to the Christian heaven. The result was that all India became one huge monastery; there was but one object, one battle—to remain pure. All the blame was cast onto women, and even the proverbs warned against them. 'What is the gate to hell?' was one of them, to which the answer was: 'Woman.' Another read: 'What is the chain which binds us all to dust? Woman.' Another one: 'Who is the blindest of the blind? He who is deceived by woman.'

"The same idea is to be found in the cloisters of the West. The development of all monasticism always meant the degeneration of women.

"But eventually another idea of womanhood arose. In the West it found its ideal in the wife, in India in the mother. But do not think that the priests were altogether responsible for this change. I know they always lay claim to everything in the world and I say this, although I am myself a priest. I'll bend my knees to every prophet in every religion and clime, but candor compels me to say, that here in the West the development of women was brought about by men like John Stuart Mill and the revolutionary French philosophers. Religion has done something, no doubt, but not all. Why, in Asia Minor, Christian bishops to this day keep a harem!

"The Christian ideal is that which is found in the Anglo-Saxon race. The Mohammedan woman differs vastly from her western sisters in so far as her social and intellectual development is not so pronounced. But do not, on that account, think that the Mohammedan woman is unhappy, because it is not so. In India woman has enjoyed property rights since thousands of years. Here a man may disinherit

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his wife, in India the whole estate of the deceased husband must go to the wife, personal property absolutely, real property for life.

"In India the mother is the centre of the family and our highest ideal. She is to us the representative of God, as God is the mother of the Universe. It was a female sage who first found the unity of God, and laid down this doctrine in one of the first hymns of the Vedas. Our God is both personal and absolute, the absolute is male, the personal, female. And thus it comes that we now say: 'The first manifestation of God is the hand that rocks the cradle.' He is of the 'arian' race, who is born through prayer, and he is a nonarian, who is born through sensuality.

"This doctrine of prenatal influence is now slowly being recognized, and science as well as religion calls out: 'Keep yourself holy, and pure.' So deeply has this been recognized in India, that there we even speak of adultery in marriage, except when marriage is consummated in prayer. And I and every good Hindoo believe, that my mother was pure and holy, and hence I owe her everything that I am. That is the secret of the race—chastity."

Of this lecture Swamiji wrote to Isabelle McKindley on January 24:

24th Jan
528 5th Ave
New York

Dear Miss Bell
I hope you are well . . .

My last lecture was not very much appreciated by the *men* but awfully so by *vemen* You know this Brooklyn is the centre of anti-women's rights movements and when I told them that women deserve and are fit for everything they did not like it of course. Never mind the women were in ecstasies.

I have got again a little cold. I am going to the Guernseys I have got a room downtown also where I will go several hours to hold my classes etc Mother church must be

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all right by this time and you are all enjoying this nice weather. Give Mrs. Adams mountain high love and regard from me when you see her next.

Send my letters as usual to the Guernseys.

With love for all

Ever your aff bro
Vivekananda

But not all the "vemen" appreciated Swamiji's lecture. In the light of the propaganda which had been spread by the Pundita Ramabai in America, it caused a furore among the members of the Ramabai Circle in Brooklyn. The tumult, however, did not become public until some five weeks after the lecture had been given, and will be dealt with later on. In the meantime, Swamiji delivered both public and semipublic lectures in Brooklyn.

A letter from Leon Landsberg to Isabelle McKindley, which has recently come into our hands, throws some light on his Brooklyn activities during the last week of January, 1895. The letter reads as follows:

54 W. 33rd str.
New York, Jan'y. 26th. 95.

Dear Madam,

The enclosed circular may interest you.

Yesterday [January 25] the Swami held the first of a series of parlour lectures at Mrs. Auel's residence in Brooklyn. The lecture was attended by about sixtyfive persons, most of them ladies. The Swami gave an outline of the Upanishads and the Yoga system, and his conversation was highly appreciated. His next conversation will be on Tuesday next.

I am sorry to say that since his arrival from Chicago, the Swami is constantly suffering from colds. But I hope that with the change of weather he will regain his usual good health.

With sincere regards

Leon Landsberg

The following bulletin was enclosed in the above letter:

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BROOKLYN ETHICAL ASSOCIATION

An Introductory
LECTURE and CONVERSATION
will be given by the
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
of India,
Under the Auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Association,
at the Parlors of
Mrs. Charles Auel, 65, Lefferts Place,
FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JAN. 25, 1895, AT 3-30 O'CLOCK,
Preliminary to the formation of a Class for the Exposition and Study of the Upanishads and Yogi Doctrine, as taught and practised by the Sages of India.
Subject of the First Conversation:
"THE UPANISHADS, AND DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL."

The expositions of the VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY and Religious and Ethical Teachings of the Hindus, by the SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, have delighted and instructed cultivated audiences in Cambridge, Chicago, St. Louis, and elsewhere in the United States.

The course of mental discipline inculcated is, it is claimed, based on scientific psychological principles.

One who has attended the Cambridge Classes of the SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, writes: "He has helped many students (in Harvard University) in the solution of philosophical problems in which they had become involved in their course of study."

As only a limited number can be admitted to these classes, a minimum fee of Fifty Cents will be charged for admission to each Conversation, payable at the door. Those who voluntarily desire, can contribute larger free-will offerings toward the Swami's Educational work.

(The above mention of the "Cambridge Classes" refers, of course, to the morning talks which Swamiji gave during December at Mrs. Ole Bull's home.)

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As has been seen in Landsberg's letter of January 26, Swamiji gave a "parlour lecture" in Brooklyn on January 29, as well as on January 25. Very likely there were more Brooklyn parlor lectures but unfortunately we have at present no record of them.

Swamiji's third public lecture in Brooklyn at the Pouch Mansion was entitled, "Buddhism as Understood in India." This lecture was delivered on Sunday, February 3 and was reported upon in the *Brooklyn Standard Union* of Monday, February 4, as follows:

TRUE BUDDHISM

An Eloquent Defense of It by Swami Vivekananda

The Hindoo Monk at His Best

Buddhism a Reformation of Ancient Society and Religion—It Combated Casts, and was the First to Preach Mercy towards Animals—Scenes from the Life of Buddha—Meeting of the Ethical Society at the Pouch Mansion.

Never before, during his stay in this city, was Swami Vivekananda more eloquent or impressive than last evening, when he spoke to a large audience, at the Pouch Mansion, on the subject: "Buddhism as Understood in India." Himself imbued with a holy enthusiasm for the ancient religion of his forefathers, the celebrated Hindoo monk held his hearers spellbound with the fascinating earnestness of his speech.

Buddha has no truer disciple than this youthful priest, who, conscious of his own strength, boldly declares: "The morality of true Buddhism is the noblest yet given to the world!" His tribute to "Buddha, the Great, the Master," was touching in its grand simplicity; as it was admirable in its noble eloquence. His words last night were not those of a paid exponent of a peculiar system of philosophy, but rather those of an apostle, preaching a creed which has become a part of his very self.

Swami Vivekananda, being presented by Dr. Janes, the president of the Ethical Association, under whose auspices these lectures are given, said in part: "The Hindoo occupies

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a unique position towards Buddhism. Like Christ, who antagonized the Jews, Buddha antagonized the prevailing religion of India; but while Christ was rejected by his countrymen, Buddha was accepted as God Incarnate. He denounced the priest craft at the very doors of their temples, yet to-day he is worshipped by them.

"Not, however, the creed which bears his name. What Buddha taught, the Hindoo believes, but what the Buddhists teach, we do not accept. For the teachings of the Great Master, spread out broadcast over the land, came back in tradition, colored by the channels through which they passed.

"In order to understand Buddhism fully we must go back to the mother religion from which it came. The books of Veda have two parts; the first, Cura makanda [Karma Kanda], contains the sacrificial portion, while the second part, the Vedanta, denounces sacrifices, teaching charity and love, but not death. Each sect took up what portion it liked. The charvaka, or materialist, basing his doctrine on the first part, believed that all was matter and that there is neither a heaven nor a hell, neither a soul nor a God. The second sect, the Gains [Jains], were very moral atheists, who, while rejecting the idea of a God, believed that there is a soul, striving for more perfect development. These two sects were called the heretics. A third sect was called orthodox, because it accepted the Vedas, although it denied the existence of a personal God, believing that everything sprang from the atom or nature.

"Thus the intellectual world was divided before Buddha came. But for a correct understanding of his religion, it is also necessary to speak of the caste then existing. The Vedas teach that he who knows God is a Brahma [Brahmana]; he who protects his fellows is a Chocta [Kshatriya], while he who gains his livelihood in trade is a Visha [Vaishya]. These different social diversions developed or degenerated into iron-bound casts [castes], and an organized and crystallized priest-craft stood upon the neck of the nation. At this time Buddha was born, and his religion is therefore the culmination of an attempt at a religious and a social reformation.

"The air was full of the din of discussion; 20,000 blind priests were trying to lead 20,000,000 [?] blind men, fighting amongst themselves. What was more needed at that time

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than for a Buddha to preach? 'Stop quarreling, throw your books aside, be perfect!' Buddha never fought true casts, for they are nothing but the congregation of those of a particular natural tendency, and they are always valuable. But Buddha fought the degenerated casts with their hereditary privileges, and spoke to the Brahmins: 'True Brahmins are not greedy, nor criminal, nor angry—are you such? If not, do not mimic the genuine, real men. Cast is a state, not an iron-bound class, and every one who knows and loves God is a true Brahmin.' And with regard to the sacrifices, he said: 'Where do the Vedas say that sacrifices make us pure? They may please, perhaps, the angels, but they make us no better. Hence, let off these mummeries—love God and strive to be perfect.'

"In later years these doctrines of Buddha were forgotten. Going to lands yet unprepared for the reception of these noble truths, they came back tainted with the foibles of these nations. Thus the Nihilists arose—a sect whose doctrine it was that the whole universe, God and soul, had no basis, but that everything is continually changing. They believed in nothing but the enjoyment of the moment, which eventually resulted in the most revolting orgies. That, however, is not the doctrine of Buddha, but a horrible degeneration of it, and honor to the Hindoo nation, who stood up and drove it out.

"Every one of Buddha's teachings is founded in the Vedantas. He was one of those monks who wanted to bring out the truths, hidden in those books and in the forest monasteries. I do not believe that the world is ready for them even now; it still wants those lower religions, which teach of a personal God. Because of this, the original Buddhism could not hold the popular mind, until it took up the modifications, which were reflected back from Thibet and the Tartars. Original Buddhism was not at all nihilistic. It was but an attempt to combat cast and priestcraft; it was the first in the world to stand as champion of the dumb animals, the first to break down the caste, standing between man and man."

Swami Vivekananda concluded his lecture with the presentation of a few pictures from the life of Buddha, the

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"great one, who never thought a thought and never performed a deed except for the good of others; who had the greatest intellect and heart, taking in all mankind and all the animals, all embracing, ready to give up his life for the highest angels as well as for the lowest worm." He first showed how Buddha, for the purpose of saving a herd of sheep, intended for a king's sacrifice, had thrown himself upon the altar, and thus accomplished his purpose. He next pictured how the great prophet had parted from his wife and baby at the cry of suffering mankind, and how, lastly, after his teachings had been universally accepted in India, he accepted the invitation of a despised Pariah, who dined him on swine's flesh, from the effects of which he died.

The *New York World* of February 4 briefly mentioned the lecture on Buddhism as follows:

AN EXPOSITION OF BUDDHISM

Six hundred people assembled in the ballroom of the Pouch Gallery at No. 345 Clinton Avenue, last evening to listen to an address by Swami Vivekananda, whose able expositions of the Veda's philosophy have delighted large audiences in Brooklyn before.

As the address was to be given before the Brooklyn Ethical Association, the largest part of the audience were members of that organization.

III

It will be remembered that in his lecture at the Pouch Mansion on January 20 Swamiji had said: "In India woman has enjoyed property rights since thousands of years. Here a man may disinherit his wife, in India the whole estate of the deceased husband must go to the wife, personal property absolutely, real property for life." Inoffensive as it may seem, this statement had a devastating effect upon the women of the Ramabai Circle of Brooklyn.

The Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati was a well-known exponent of education for Hindu child widows, and the somewhat romantic story

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of her life was legend among her Western friends. Born in 1858, she was the daughter of a Marathi priest, who brought her up in seclusion and educated her in Sanskrit. On the death of her parents, Ramabai, then sixteen, wandered on foot with her younger brother through India, finding occupation as a cook in various Brahmin families and incidentally gathering, it is said, a knowledge of Hindu customs. On reaching Calcutta, she was acknowledged by the professors of the university as a Sanskrit scholar and received from them the title of "Sarasvati," goddess of learning. After this followed two years of travel, lectures and writing in the interest of Hindu women. When twenty-two, Ramabai married and settled down, only to be left two years later a widow with an eight-months-old daughter. She forthwith sold her husband's house and set off for England, where she became a Christian convert and was made professor of Sanskrit in Cheltenham College. Then, coming to the conclusion that she could best help her countrywomen by starting a school in India for child widows, she came to America to study modern educational methods. During the two and a half years that she remained in this country she directed her energies to raising $25,000 in a lump sum in order to establish her proposed school and $5,000 to be donated annually for ten years for its perpetuation. To this end she enlisted the support of many influential men and women and founded "Ramabai Circles" from one end of the United States to the other—fifty-five in all. These Circles were by no means obscure organizations. The first Board of Officers of the Ramabai Association of the United States, for instance, included among its members the Reverends Lyman Abbott and Edward Everet Hale, both highly influential preachers and writers.

But though Ramabai's purpose was no doubt admirable, the means she employed did nothing to mitigate the poor opinion of India already rooted deep in the American mind. In an effort to raise funds she spread tales of her motherland which were on a par with the most lurid exaggerations of the Christian missionaries. Her lectures, published in the American newspapers, were replete with such statements as: "Widows are not allowed to marry again, and are left to starve and drudge." "There are over 20,000,000 child widows in India, nearly a fifth of them under four years of age, suffering untold wretchedness and misery." "Of the 250,000 [?] women in India one fifth are widows, the beasts of burden for their community." "But it's the child widow, upon whom, in an especial manner, falls the abuse and

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hatred of the community, as the greatest criminal upon whom Heaven's judgments have been pronounced."—And so on.

In "The High-Caste Hindu Woman," written in 1887, Ramabai let her emotional imagination run full riot. The book reads like an early version of "Mother India" and was, as were her lectures, calculated to wring the hearts and purses of American women.

"Mothers and fathers," Ramabai pleaded in conclusion, "compare the condition of your own sweet darlings at your happy firesides with that of millions of little girls of a corresponding age in India, who have already been sacrificed on the unholy altar of an inhuman social custom, and then ask yourselves whether you can stop short of doing something to rescue the little widows from the hands of their tormentors. Millions of heart-rending cries are daily rising from within the stony walls in Indian zenanas ; thousands of child widows are annually dying without a ray of hope to cheer their hearts, and other thousands are daily being crushed under a fearful weight of sin and shame, with no one to prevent their ruin by providing for them a better way." To promote the sale of this book Ramabai's friends had "A Christmas Thought for India," which was that "those women of the United States *who know and who trust Ramabai,* will make one united effort at this season of gift-making and gladness, to sell an extraordinarily large number of copies of *The High-Caste Hindu Woman.*"

The American women of the latter part of the nineteenth century were restless. Tired of being merely the ornaments of the country, beginning to assert themselves as Women—always with a capital "W"—and yet still barred from business and politics, they sought out some noble cause, something which they alone could understand and which they alone could serve. The persecuted Hindu child widows of Ramabai's lectures and book met every requirement, providing, as they did, drama, pathos and an opportunity to patronize. In view of this it is clear why Swamiji's statement to the effect that Hindu wives and widows were protected by law to a greater extent than were nineteenth-century American women came as a severe blow to the good ladies of the Ramabai Circle. It not only undermined the effectiveness of their fund-raising propaganda, but destroyed a good deal of the personal satisfaction they had derived from being benefactors to a class of women less emancipated and less respected than they themselves. On Sunday, February 24, the president of the Circle registered a protest through the pages of the *Daily Eagle,* which read as follows:

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THE LAST BATTLE

RAMABAI CIRCLE AROUSED

Statement of Lecturer Swami Vivekananda Denied as to Treatment of Widows.

The Hindoo Monk Declares that Child Wives Left by High Caste Hindoos are Protected by Law—The President of the Ramabai Circle Cites Testimony to Prove that They are Starved and Beaten.

A sharp issue has arisen between certain persons in this city, who are interested in Christian work in India, and Swami Vivekananda, a Hindoo monk now in Brooklyn, on the question of the suffering of child widows in India. Swami Vivekananda denied, in a lecture in the Pouch mansion a fortnight ago, that widows of high caste Hindoos undergo suffering. High caste Hindoo widows are, he said, especially protected by law. This statement is held by many persons in this city to be open to question, and especially by those who are members of the Brooklyn Ramabai circle. Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, from whom the Brooklyn circle and about sixty others in this country are named, visited this country eight years ago, and among other large cities visited Brooklyn. She was a convert to Christianity, and is now conducting an undenominational school for girls in India. The Ramabai circles in this country contribute from $100 to $150 a year each for the support of the institution. That which caused the creation of the Ramabai circles and is the strength of their financial support to the school in India is chiefly the stirring account Ramabai gave when here, though it is declared that there is ample corroborative proof of her representations in that respect.

The president of the Brooklyn Ramabai circle is Mrs. James McKeen of 136 Henry Street. Mrs. McKeen said yesterday to the reporter of the Eagle:

"A square issue of fact seems to be presented on this question of the suffering of child widows in India. We learned from Ramabai, in her addresses here, that girls 3, 4, 5 and 6 years old were married to men of 50 or 60 years of age. If they were not married before they were 11 years old it

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would be a family disgrace. If the husband died without having a son born to him the widow was compelled to enter upon the most abject life. All their fine clothing and jewelry was taken from them, coarse garments were put on and they became household drudges. I know of one instance from an American woman, who was in India at the time and was personally acquainted with the facts, that a young Hindoo girl married an old man and, a year after his death, was found sick and coarsely clad, lying on an old mat and praying for death to relieve her from her sufferings. She said to this visitor, who told me the story, 'Pray that all the child widows may die. It would be a relief from their sufferings.' From other sources I am thoroughly convinced that Ramabai's story is correct in every detail. As a member of the Ramabai circle in Brooklyn, during the past six years, I have many times solicited money from the public in behalf of suffering child widows in India. It has been reported to me by many creditable gentlemen that they have lately heard it publicly stated by one entitled to know of what he speaks that there does not exist in India any such class as that for which we have appealed. India is a large country, very much larger than many of us are apt to imagine who look only upon the map of it drawn to a scale of 500 miles to the inch. I have never been in any part of it, and cannot pretend to speak of its manners and customs from personal knowledge. But it seems to me that in some respects this absence of personal contact with the subject involved may fit one better for a calm survey of the testimony proffered, as a judge is supposed to be better qualified for giving an unprejudiced judgment when his personal sympathies, interests and tastes are not at all concerned in the decision. What might seem to one born and bred in India a proper and happy condition, might seem to another born and bred in a western land a condition of humiliation and misery. Without desiring, therefore, to assume any superior knowledge on this subject, or to call in question the statements of any others from their own points of view—happiness and unhappiness being to some extent relative terms—I am willing to state the reasons that lead me still to believe that there is much suffering among the child widows of India, and a condition of degradation and misery

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among its women that the happier people of America are in duty bound to alleviate to the extent that may be within our power.

"It may be asked what is the credibility of my witnesses? Naturally the first witness to whom I turn is the Pundita Ramabai. Concerning her probity, consider the personal regard in which she is held by those who have known her for many years, both in this country and in England, and also look at the unsolicited testimony of her compatriots as to her truthfulness and honor. [Here follows some favorable testimony concerning Ramabai and her work from Max Müller, a Miss Hamlin, an unidentified Madras paper and the *London Atheneum*. Mrs. McKeen then continues:]

"It seems to me that when a woman, such as Ramabai is here described to be, devotes her life to the work of relieving a certain class from misery it is not unreasonable to believe that such a class exists.

"The Bishop of Bombay evidently thought that such a class existed, since he sent £58 to Ramabai to aid her work. Miss Manning, honorable secretary of the British National Indian association, is persuaded that such a class exists, for she has contributed £158 to Ramabai for its relief, and, finally, Mrs. J. W. Adams of Boston, Mass., widely known in this city, and much beloved and honored, having been sent to India by the Ramabai association to look after its work, wrote from Poona last year these stirring words:

" 'We have been told that the life of the child widow is not so hard and pitiless as represented; that the majority have happy homes and they yield cheerfully, bravely, to the restrictions, customs or religion placed upon them. Why, then, are the shaven head and the coarse white garment badges of shame? Why are the bodies emaciated and disfigured by starvation and cruel blows? Why the sullen, joyless expression of the face? Why so many suicides and lives of shame among the child widows? Let him who believes such statements, though made by the Hindoos themselves, come to the Sharada Sadana, listen to the pitiful histories of some of its inmates, see the white marks of the hot iron on the head, the little white scars made by sharp finger nails meeting the tender flesh of the face—as I have heard and

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seen all this, and much more—and he will not only know the truth, but he will feel it a privilege to do something for these unfortunate children.'

"I think what I have said is sufficient to convince any unprejudiced person that if I have been mistaken in this matter I do not speak unadvisedly and have the honor to be mistaken in good company. I shall be glad to mail reports of the work done in India to anyone who will send me his or her address."

For the newspapers a disturbance such as this was always welcome. The *Daily Standard Union* was quick to take advantage of Mrs. McKeen's hostility and on February 25 printed the following:

WIDOWS IN INDIA

Swami Vivekananda's Statements Denied In The Ramabai Circle

In his lecture delivered in the Pouch Gallery before the Brooklyn Ethical Association two weeks ago [January 20] the Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk who is endeavoring to enlighten Americans as to political, economic, social and religious affairs in India, denied the existence of the ill treatment of widows in that country which is alleged to exist. The Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, a convert to Christianity who visited America eight years ago, and who is now engaged in her own country in the conduct of an undenominational school for her own sex, stated in her talks here, that if the husband of a woman dies leaving no male heir the widow is despoiled of her jewelry and good clothing and is made a household drudge. Corroborative statements have come from other sources. In denying such statements the Swami Vivekananda declared that high caste widows in India are especially protected by law. His denial has created quite a stir in the Ramabai Circle of this city, which is one of many such circles founded in this country to foster the Pundita Ramabai's work in India.

The revolt promises to be a very pretty controversy, as the Swami Vivekananda has won many friends in this city,

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and will undoubtedly have a respectable following, while there will be a disposition among a large number of persons interested in such questions to give both sides an impartial hearing. The matter was referred to last night by Dr. Lewis G. Janes, president of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, at the opening of the meeting in the Pouch Gallery. He regarded the position of the Ramabai Circle as tending to bring into disrepute the Swami Vivekananda's own educational work in India, and he said that the association had made careful investigation as to the monk's position and character before inviting him to come here.

Swamiji was never without staunch supporters, and in Brooklyn his friend, Dr. Lewis G. Janes, president of the Ethical Association, came firmly to his defense. Although Janes' letter, which follows, was dated erroneously March 3 and published on March 6 by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* I am including it here, for it was actually written and sent on February 24 in answer to the article that had appeared in the *Eagle* of that date. Dr. Janes wrote:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Defended by the Brooklyn Ethical Association's President

To the Editor of the Brooklyn Eagle:

The excellent ladies of the Ramabai circle are laboring under an unfortunate misapprehension. Swami Vivekananda did not at the Pouch mansion or elsewhere in Brooklyn or at any other place deny that widows of high caste Hindoos undergo suffering. He has not, publicly or privately, as far as I am aware, in any way reprobated wise efforts for the education and elevation of Hindoo women. His only allusion in his public addresses in Brooklyn to Hindoo widows was in his lecture on "Ideals of Womanhood, Hindoo, Mohammedan and Christian," delivered at the Pouch mansion, not a fortnight ago, but on Sunday evening, January 20, five weeks ago. In this lecture he did not even allude to the Pundita Ramabai or her work, and made no such statement as that alleged in your issue of today. His allusion to Hindoo widows was brief and wholly incidental to

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the main topic of his discourse, and referred exclusively to the property rights of high caste widows under the Hindoo law. These, he asserted, were superior to those guaranteed to widows in this country, giving them absolute possession and control of their inheritance in their husbands' and patrimonial estates. [Dr. Janes erred ; Swamiji did not say "patrimonial."] Unless this statement can be disproved Swami Vivekananda's only assertion in Brooklyn with respect to high caste Hindoo widows goes unchallenged. The lecture on "Ideals of Womanhood" was introduced with the explanation that the purpose of the speaker was solely to present the ideal side, the broad, general tendency of the respective civilizations with reference to social purity and the position of woman. There was a nether side, an aspect of degradation, he admitted, in India as well as in countries called Christian, but of this side he did not propose to speak. It would be as unjust to judge India by the nether side as to judge America by the revelations of the Parkhurst investigation and the Lexow committee. Of child marriage and the social disabilities of Hindoo widows, therefore, he said nothing. As a patriotic Hindoo he presented the type of womanhood on its best and ideal side as developed under the influences of the religion and civilization prevailing in his country. That ideal was the ideal of motherhood. No nobler conception of the mother function as the highest development of the ever womanly nature has ever been presented in my hearing. No more exigent morality, alike obligatory on man and woman, has ever been preached in any pulpit in this City of Churches. The object of this communication, however, is not merely that of the correction or denial of the misapprehensions expressed and implied in the interview entitled "Ramabai Circle Aroused," but to endeavor to throw some light upon the real attitude of our guest toward the philanthropic movement in which the good ladies of the Ramabai circle are so deeply interested. The Brooklyn Ethical association numbers among its honorary corresponding members in India a gentleman whose devoted labors in behalf of the education and elevation of high caste Hindoo widows long antedated the work of Ramabai. This gentleman is Babu Sasipada Banergie [Banerjee] of Baranagar, a suburb

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of Calcutta, himself a Hindoo, who, in defiance of current prejudices, more than thirty years ago embarked on this work of reform, which, with his own good wife as a helper, he has since prosecuted with untiring assiduity and devotion. He has won the respect and indorsement of many of the best citizens of his own faith, as well as of Christians who are sufficiently large hearted and liberal to be capable of seeing that good may sometimes come out of Nazareth. Swami Vivekananda is his friend and believes in his work. I have this assurance from his own lips. The work of Babu Sasipada Banergie has been conducted quietly and without ostentation, but it has been fruitful of good result. It is not the object aimed at by the Pundita Ramabai that Swami Vivekananda criticises, but the methods adopted for collecting money, and the impossibility, as he believes, of accomplishing large results in the way proposed. The fact that the Pundita Ramabai is herself a Christian convert is sufficient to repel a great majority even of the liberally inclined high caste Hindoos from encouraging it, as the printed reports of the Ramabai circles are themselves insufficient [?] to demonstrate. Nor will the lofty and not altogether reprehensible pride of the Brahmin permit him to be the recipient of favors rendered possible by the solicitation of money in distant countries from those of an alien faith. To do this would be contrary to a deep seated religious and social prejudice, which, whether we reprobate it or not is an unquestionable fact. The wise helper of his fellow human beings will never waste his strength in kicking against facts. As the reports of Ramabai's work also show, it has been impossible to meet with even a small measure of success save by the assurance that her school was absolutely non-Christian and that no efforts toward proselyting would therein be tolerated. A breath of suspicion that this rule was in danger of being violated, some time since, caused a considerable secession of pupils from her school, and the resignation of all the members of a board of advisors consisting of high caste Hindoo gentlemen of great liberality and the highest social standing. That the practice of the Swami Vivekananda, while in this country, has been consistent with this high conception of duty, I have had occasion to know. Though

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he has at heart a noble enterprise for the education of the religious teachers of his own faith in sociology, economics and the better things in our Western civilization, he has made absolutely no effort to solicit subscriptions for this purpose. Nor will he accept one penny for his work as a teacher; nor even for this larger work, save as a voluntary, free will offering from people of calm judgment, intellectually convinced of the importance of the work. In Brooklyn he has absolutely declined to hold classes where an admission fee is charged, even for the purpose of paying the expenses of the room and advertising. For himself he accepts from public lectures only what is necessary for traveling expenses and his food, clothing and lodging, from week to week. I personally know of one instance where he returned to an enthusiastic admirer a check for $500, freely given, declining to receive it because he did not need it, and feared the donor was carried away with undue enthusiasm. Those who know the Swami Vivekananda best write in testimony to his nobility of character, and the purity and elevation of his daily life. I have made diligent inquiry in Chicago, where he has many devoted friends; in Cambridge, where his lectures and classes were attended by people of the highest culture, including students of the university, and elsewhere, and have heard but one reply. In the town hall of Calcutta, on September 5 last, a large meeting of his own people was held, which in terms of unqualified eulogy indorsed his character and work. This meeting was reported in the Indian Mirror of the day following, together with a sketch of his life and experiences, from one acquainted with his entire career. The New York Sun of September 2, contained an account of a similar meeting held in Madras. From Professor Rhys-Davids we have the assurance that the gentlemen participating in these meetings are of the highest standing in the community. We are justified, therefore, in regarding the word of the Swami Vivekananda as above reproach, and we know him to be in full sympathy with all wise movements for the elevation and improvement of the people, both here and in his own country. That India has something to teach us, that our obligations are reciprocal, he unquestionably believes and teaches. And in this conclusion, when we rid ourselves of

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our ethnic narrowness, I, for one, believe we shall agree with him. I need only add that I have written without consultation with Swami Vivekananda, and have said in his behalf some things which his modesty and position as a religious teacher would doubtless prevent him from saying for himself.

LEWIS G. JANES.
President Brooklyn Ethical Association.
Brooklyn, March 3 [February 24], 1895.

As Dr. Janes said, it was true that Swamiji had not dwelt upon the condition of high-caste widows in India; he had, indeed, not mentioned the lives of widows at all. The question then is, what had aroused Mrs. McKeen's passionate and insistent declaration that Hindu widows *did* undergo suffering? This question was, I believe, partially answered when it was pointed out earlier that Swamiji's statement regarding the inheritance laws of India implied that widows as a class were not persecuted victims of India's social system. Another fact which explains the apparently unprovoked excitement of the women of the Ramabai Circle was that Swamiji's views regarding child widows were not unknown to them. The reader will remember that Swamiji's first talk in America had been delivered before the Ramabai Circle in Boston in August of 1893 (Chapter One). There can be little doubt that at that time he had spoken directly about the condition of Hindu widows in India and that Ramabai's followers had received a severe shock. It would not be unreasonable to believe that thenceforth all the fifty-five Circles of America had been antagonistic to him and that this antagonism had grown in proportion to his growing fame and influence. Moreover, it is very likely that the Ramabai Circles had been influenced in their attitude toward Swamiji by the Christian missionaries. Indeed, as is evidenced by a letter which he wrote on July 1, 1895, to Alasinga, Swamiji suspected this to be the case. The Brooklyn Circle was not, therefore, as it might have appeared to an outsider, suddenly aroused; rather it was making a last stand against an old and feared opponent.

Silence would perhaps have better served the Ramabai Circles' interest, for Swamiji made no compromise in his reply. After his fourth lecture in Brooklyn, given the day following the printing of Mrs. McKeen's interview with the press, he was directly questioned regarding Hindu widows and, in a few clear words, denied Ramabai's

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tales—a denial which the Circle had anticipated and which was, to them, shattering. This lecture of Monday, February 25, was entitled "India's Gift to The World," and was reported upon in the *Brooklyn Standard Union* of February 27 as follows:

"INDIA'S GIFTS"

The Subject of Swami Vivekananda's Last Lecture.

Religion, Science and Art have all been Advanced by The East, He Says—Christianity the Offspring of Buddhism—Some Charges Refuted by the Hindoo Monk.

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, delivered a lecture Monday night under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Association before a fairly large audience at the hall of the Long Island Historical Society, corner Pierrepont and Clinton streets. His subject was "India's Gift to the World."

He spoke of the wondrous beauties of his native land, "where stood the earliest cradle of ethics, arts, sciences, and literature, and the integrity of whose sons and the virtue of whose daughters have been sung by all travelers." Then the lecturer showed in rapid details, what India has given to the world.

"In religion," he said, "she has exerted a great influence on Christianity, as the very teachings of Christ would [could] be traced back to those of Buddha." He showed by quotations from the works of European and American scientists the many points of similarity between Buddha and Christ. The latter's birth, his seclusion from the world, the number of his apostles, and the very ethics of his teachings are the same as those of Buddha, living many hundred years before him.

"Is it mere chance," the lecturer asked, "or was Buddha's religion but the foreshadowing of that of Christ? The majority of your thinkers seem to be satisfied in the latter explanation, but there are some bold enough to say that Christianity is the direct offspring of Buddhism just as the earliest heresy in the Christian religion—the Monecian [Manichaean] heresy—is now universally regarded as the teaching of a sect of Buddhists. But there is more evidence

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that Christianity is founded in Buddhism. We find it in recently discovered inscriptions from the reign of Emperor Oshoka [Ashoka] of India, about 300 B.C., who made treaties with all the Grecian kings, and whose missionaries discriminated [disseminated?] in those very parts, where, centuries after, Christianity flourished, the principles of the Buddhistic religion. Thus it is explained, why you have our doctrine of trinity, of incarnation of God, and of our ethics, and why the service in our temples is so much alike to that in your present Catholic churches, from the mass to the chant and benediction. Buddhism had all these long before you. Now use your own judgment on these premises—we Hindoos stand ready to be convinced that yours is the earlier religion, although we had ours some three hundred years before yours was even thought of.

"The same holds good with respect to sciences. India has given to antiquity the earliest scientifical physicians, and, according to Sir William Hunter, she has even contributed to modern medical science by the discovery of various chemicals and by teaching you how to reform misshapen ears and noses. Even more it has done in mathematics, for algebra, geometry, astronomy, and the triumph of modern science—mixed mathematics—were all invented in India, just so much as the ten numerals, the very cornerstone of all present civilization, were discovered in India, and are in reality, Sanskrit words.

"In philosophy we are even now head and shoulders above any other nation, as Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, has confessed. In music India gave to the world her system of notation, with the seven cardinal notes and the diatonic scale, all of which we enjoyed as early as 350 B.C., while it came to Europe only in the eleventh century. In philology, our Sanskrit language is now universally acknowledged to be the foundation of all European languages, which, in fact, are nothing but jargonized Sanskrit.

"In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high as those of any language; our 'Shaguntala' [Shakuntala] was summarized by Germany's greatest poet, as 'heaven and earth united.' India has given to the world the fables of Aesop, which were copied by Aesop from an old Sanskrit

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book; it has given the Arabian Nights, yes, even the story of Cinderella and the Bean Stalks. In manufacture, India was the first to make cotton and purple [dye], it was proficient in all works of jewelry, and the very word 'sugar,' as well as the article itself, is the product of India. Lastly she has invented the game of chess and the cards and the dice. So great, in fact, was the superiority of India in every respect, that it drew to her borders the hungry cohorts of Europe, and thereby indirectly brought about the discovery of America.

"And now, what has the world given to India in return for all that? Nothing but nullification [vilification] and curse and contempt. The world waded in her children's life-blood, it reduced India to poverty and her sons and daughters to slavery, and now it adds insult to injury by preaching to her a religion which can only thrive on the destruction of every other religion. But India is not afraid. It does not beg for mercy at the hands of any nation. Our only fault is that we cannot fight to conquer; but we trust in the eternity of truth. India's message to the world is first of all, her blessing; she is returning good for the evil which is done her, and thus she puts into execution this noble idea, which had its origin in India. Lastly, India's message is, that calm goodness, patience and gentleness will ultimately triumph. For where are the Greeks, the one-time masters of the earth? They are gone. Where are the Romans, at the tramp of whose cohorts the world trembled? Passed away. Where are the Arabs, who in fifty years had carried their banners from the Atlantic to the Pacific? and where are the Spaniards, the cruel murderers of millions of men? Both races are nearly extinct; but thanks to the morality of her children, the kinder race will never perish, and she will yet see the hour of her triumph."

At the close of the lecture, which was warmly applauded, Swami Vivekananda answered a number of questions in regard to the customs of India. He denied positively the truth of the statement published in yesterday's [February 25] Standard Union, to the effect that widows are ill treated in India. The law guarantees her not only her own property, before marriage, but also all she received from her husband, at whose death, if there be no direct heirs, the property goes

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to her. Widows seldom marry in India, because of the scarcity of men. He also stated that the self-sacrifices of wives at the death of their husbands, as well as the fanatical self-destruction under the wheels of the Juggernaut, have wholly stopped, and referred his hearers for proof to Sir William Hunter's "History of the Indian Empire."

On February 26 the *Brooklyn Times* printed a brief report of Swamiji's lecture, and on February 27 the *Daily Eagle* ran a detailed, though, as will be seen later, faulty account of his answer to the question about Hindu widows. These two articles follow, respectively:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA LECTURES.

He Tells about the Arts and Sciences of India.

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk who first came into prominence in this country in connection with the world's Congress of religions at the fair in Chicago, and who has recently been delivering a series of lectures in Brooklyn, spoke last night in Historical hall under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical association. He delivered his lecture on "India's Gift to the World" to an audience that was extremely enthusiastic and appreciative. The lecturer's subject was particularly interesting to those of antiquarian turn of mind, for he spoke of the arts and sciences which India has given to the world, of the astronomy, the medicine, the mathematics which were developed in that country. He was frequently and heartily applauded. With him on the platform sat President Lewis G. Janes, of the Ethical association ; the other officers of the association, Dr. Charles H. Shepard, James A. Skelton, Mrs. Ole Bull and a number of other ladies and gentlemen.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Denies that the Child Widows of India are Abused.

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, lectured in Historical hall Monday night under the auspices of the

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Brooklyn Ethical association, on "India's Gift to the World." There were about two hundred and fifty people in the hall when the Swami stepped on the platform. Much interest was manifested on account of the denial by Mrs. James McKeen, president of the Brooklyn Ramabai circle, which is interested in Christian work in India, of the statement attributed to the lecturer that the child widows of India were not protected [ill-treated]. In no part of his lecture was reference made to this denial, but after he had concluded, one of the audience asked the lecturer what explanation he had to make to the statement. Swami Vivekananda said that it was untrue that child widows were abused or ill treated in any way. He added:

"It is a fact that some Hindus marry very young. Others marry when they have attained a fair age and some do not marry at all. My grandfather was married when quite a child. My father when he was 14 years old and I am 30 years old and am not yet married. When a husband dies all his possessions go to his widow. If a widow is poor she is the same as poor widows in any other country. Old men sometimes marry children, but if the husband was wealthy it was all the better for the widow the sooner he died. I have traveled all over India, but failed to see a case of the ill treatment mentioned. At one time there were religious fanatics, widows, who threw themselves into a fire and were consumed by the flames at the death of their husbands. The Hindus did not believe in this, but did not prevent it, and it was not until the British obtained control of India that it was finally prohibited. These women were considered saints and in many instances monuments were erected to their memory."

The above report of Swamiji's answer to the question regarding widows was, as he himself later pointed out, imperfect and incomplete. While denying that all widows were ill-treated, he had admitted that some cases of ill-treatment might exist; these, however, were sporadic and exceptional. He repudiated positively and without qualification the statement that ill-treatment of widows was an accepted and traditional part of Hindu custom, restating, as has been seen in the *Standard Union* report, the pertinent inheritance laws. Swamiji

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further declared himself in full sympathy with movements for the education of Hindu widows.

Whether the editors of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* were biased in favor of the Ramabai Circle, or whether they just delighted in keeping the controversy alive is a moot point ; but, in either case, they managed to confuse things. It was on March 6 that the *Eagle* finally thought fit to publish Dr. Janes' letter of February 24, in which he had pointed out, referring to the lecture on "Ideal Womanhood," that Swamiji had not mentioned the condition of Hindu widows. The date of this letter was falsified to read March 3, making it seem that Dr. Janes had written it *after* Swamiji's lecture of February 25, in which he had spoken of Hindu widows in answer to a question. Mrs. McKeen was quick to take advantage of the false position in which Janes had been placed and forthwith provided the *Eagle* with more copy. On Sunday, March 10, the following article appeared in that paper:

THE PUNDITA RAMABAI

Mrs. McKeen Says She is a Woman Christian or Hindoo can Trust.

The controversy between the friends of the Pundita Ramabai and those of the Hindoo monk, Swami Vivekananda as to the treatment of the child widows of India, though slumbering, is still far from being settled. When Mrs. James McKeen, one of the Pundita's staunchest friends, was asked what she had to say regarding the statement made by Dr. Lewis G. Janes of the Ethical society to the effect that the Hindoo monk had not at any time denied the suffering of the widows detailed by the Pundita, she said:

"It is very gratifying to the friends of the Pundita Ramabai that Dr. Janes who has taken upon himself the responsibility of recommending Swami Vivekananda to this community as a religious teacher, should tell us that his oriental guest 'did not at the Pouch mansion or elsewhere in Brooklyn or any other place, deny that widows of high caste Hindoos undergo sufferings.' Nevertheless, in view of the widespread impression to the contrary, in view of the fact that one member of the New York chamber of commerce, whose

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word is everywhere as good as his bond, distinctly told the writer that he had heard the monk so declare, and once two prominent members of the Ethical association also reported to the writer the same statement, since four reputable and well known citizens unite in giving us the same testimony, since an Eagle report of the lecture in the Historical hall, on February 25, gives the same evidence, and, finally, since one of our own national board heard him so declare at a meeting of a well known Boston literary club, it seems not unreasonable to suppose either the monk's words have been capable of two interpretations, or that our friend has been caught napping in his presidential chair.

"It is pleasant also to record that our learned Pundita quite agrees with Dr. Janes and his Hindoo friend as to the best method to be employed in order to reach the high caste Hindoo widow (whether suffering or not) and give her the priceless boon of education. Ramabai refused to accept the proffered support of a prominent Congregational church in Boston and also a like offer from an Episcopalian church, which would have been glad to enter the field of India with such a helper. She persistently declared that the orthodox high caste Brahmin could only be reached by a non religious school and that she could only accept aid from a body of good men and women of all denominations and of all creeds, who would unite solely for the rescue of these little widows from ignorance and misery.

"As to the position of these widows before the law, it has always been Ramabai's strong contention in her many public discussions of the subject in India, that the Hindoos themselves were transgressing the old laws which they profess to serve, in persecuting these little ones. She has stood as Luther stood at Wittenberg appealing to the scriptures, the law of the church against the church. As to Baba Sasipada Panergie [Babu Sasipada Banerjee], the friend of Swami Vivekananda, whose work and methods he so wholly approves, I quite agree in according to him all praise. I wish I had now at hand a letter received from him some years ago, explaining his work to our association and asking for our sympathy and aid. It is difficult to understand what seems to be a rooted antagonism among the cultivated Hindoos

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toward Ramabai and her work. Perhaps an experience related to me by Mr. Moncure D. Conway may somewhat explain it. Mr. Conway happened to be in Persia when the news reached there of Ramabai's conversion to Christianity. Mr. Conway himself seemed to rather regret the step she had taken. He told me he had seen the young men in Persia fairly gnash their teeth in rage while tears rolled down their cheeks, as they exclaimed, "To think that our Ramabai, our brilliant Ramabai, of whom we were so proud, to think that she has embraced Christianity!" According to Mr. Conway, the very thought of it seemed to fill them with rage and shame.

"It is well known that there is no such bitter hostility as religious hostility. And incredible as it may seem it is a fact that both here and in India some of the hardest blows Ramabai has received have come from men to whom she had given substantial and much needed aid. One Hindoo student who came to this country friendless and poor brought a letter of introduction from Ramabai to her circle with a request to the treasurer to give him for her almost 10 per cent. of her own small income in order to aid him prosecute his studies. The young man accepted the money and settled down to work. Almost the first use he made of his newly acquired power was to attack Ramabai and pronounce her work a failure. I am glad to say this man was not Mr. Vivikananda. The story, however, may illustrate how deep the religious hate of an educated Hindoo may bite.

"The Shawda Sadan [Sharada Sadana] did indeed receive a great blow last year and that, too, at the hands of its professed friends. We are, however, able to report that many of them have repented of their hasty move and some of the most eminent of whom Dr. Janes speaks in high commendation have taken pains to publicly express their renewed confidence in the school. At the latest reports there were fifty-six pupils in the school, with new applications from day to day. And one word more as to Ramabai's Christianity, which seems to bring upon her what might be called a mild rebuke from our esteemed president of the Ethical society. No one emphasizes more clearly than Ramabai the ethical side of Hindooism. She is thoroughly loyal to her people, and

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would neither Anglicize nor Americanize them with a foreign creed. She bears the heart of a Paul and not of a Peter. And from what I have heard her say, from what I have read and heard of her writings, I believe she would hold Christianity as not antagonistic to the best Brahminism, but inclusive of it, as Paul declared on Mars hill, 'Whom ye ignorantly worship him declare I unto you.' In short, she is a woman in whom both Hindoo and Christian may safely trust."

So Swamiji was now pronounced guilty of religious hatred! This barb was probably unique in all those he had received in America. But Mrs. McKeen was suffering from an unhealed wound that had been caused by the Hindu dislike of Christian proselytizing. The "great blow" to the Sharada Sadana (Ramabai's school at Poona) to which she refers, was the resignation in a body of the Hindu Advisory Board. In the records of the Brooklyn Ramabai Circle the following letter, dated August 13, 1893, is to be found: "To Mrs. J. W. Andrews, Boston: In the last letter we wrote to you . . . it was stated . . . we were unwilling to undertake any responsibility as an Advisory Board in regard to the Sharada Sadana. We are therefore surprised to find that in the reports published by you our names are still mentioned as constituting an Advisory Board in Poona. . . . No such Advisory Board as you mention has existed for the past two or three years. If the Sadana is to be conducted as an avowed proselytizing institution, we must disavow all connection with it. We beg you will take into view this declaration and cease to mention our names as members of the Advisory Board." (In August, 1893, blows were raining heavily upon Ramabai's friends. It was shortly after Mrs. Andrews had received the above letter that Swamiji gave his talk before the women of the Boston Circle.) Mrs. Andrews of Boston hastened forthwith to Poona "to see for herself" and returned with the news that there was no proselytizing. Although, after a time, some of the members of the Advisory Board relented, suspicion remained—as well it might, Ramabai being a Christian convert.

As has been said, the controversy provided excellent copy for the Brooklyn newspapers and also excellent publicity for the Ramabai Circle. On March 16, the *Standard Union* devoted two and a half columns to Ramabai's life and work, dwelling at length and in detail

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upon the horrors of a widow's lot in India. The headlines, which are enough to quote, read as follows:

RAMABAI'S WORK

The Achievements of One High Caste Hindoo Woman
Her American Supporters
Brooklyn Contributes Funds for the Enlightenment Of "Darkest India"—Authentic Descriptions of The Conditions of Child Widows—The Wonderful School At Poona and Some of the Pupils.

Having read the intrepid Mrs. McKeen's remarks in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* of March 10, Dr. Janes felt again constrained to make Swamiji's position clear to the reading public. Although in some important respects he failed to present this position correctly, his effort was valiant. The following letter, written on March 12, appeared in the *Daily Eagle* of March 17:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
Lewis G. Janes on the Hindoo Widow Question.

To the Editor of the Brooklyn Eagle:

I am strongly disinclined to continue any semblance of controversy with the good ladies of the Ramabai circle. I deprecate, indeed, any interpretation of my previous communication which would regard it as written with controversial intent. My object, on the contrary, was to show that controversy was out of place. It did not originate with us and had been commenced under a misapprehension as to the real attitude of the Swami Vivekananda toward the movement for the education of Hindoo widows. The interview with Mrs. James McKeen, as reported in your issue of last Sunday [March 10], confirms the position taken in my letter of February 24, but which has been wrongly dated March 3, in your issue of March 6, when it was published. The facts stated by Mrs. McKeen as to the incident related to her by Mr. Moncure D. Conway, strangely located by your reporter in Persia, where there are no Hindoos, and where the Pundita Ramabai probably was never heard of, curiously confirm the

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practical sagacity of Swami Vivekananda in recognizing the fact that the Hindoo people can be most effectively reached and helped through the teachers of their own faith. Nor is the repugnance of high caste Hindoos to the ministrations of Christian converts so phenomenal as it may at first appear, when we put ourselves in their place, and reflect upon the spirit with which we habitually regard a so-called pervert from Christianity. It is questionable whether, if the most cultivated and devoted lady in Brooklyn should avow her belief in Buddhism or Mohammedism [sic], she would be more acceptable as a reformer of society in this country than the Pundita Ramabai is in India. Human nature is very much the same the world over. I do not question the sincerity or devotion of the Pundita Ramabai. I do not rebuke her Christianity, mildly or otherwise, any more than I rebuke Swami Vivekananda's Hindooism or Mrs. Besant's conversion to Buddhism and Theosophy. I respect the sincere belief of every human being, and would bid them good speed in every effort for the uplifting of humanity. I deprecate, however, an attack on the Swami Vivekananda, in the name of Ramabai, which I am sure that loyal woman would never have made herself, and the false inference that the unthinking might derive that the Swami was opposed to the education of Hindoo women. This inference we hope to dispose of soon, and effectually, by a lecture which will be delivered by the Swami Vivekananda in Brooklyn, in aid of the educational work of Babu Sasipada Banerjee, so warmly commended by Mrs. McKeen. The greatest affliction of the Hindoo widow is ignorance. Education will emancipate her from the chief burden which she bears to-day. Other burdens of ill treatment, abuse, etc., which may exist in some instances are, we doubt not, sporadic and exceptional. When reputed as if they were habitual, one cannot wonder that they excite indignant protest from a patriotic lover of his people. I will only add in my own behalf that the erroneous date appended to my letter makes it appear to have been written subsequent to the remarks of Swami Vivekananda at Historical hall on February 25, reported in the Eagle of the following day; whereas it was written a day before the delivery of his lecture. And on behalf of the Swami Vivekananda I will add that the

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report of his remarks in the Eagle was both imperfect and defective. While he repudiated the unfair and extravagant statements about the treatment of Hindoo widows he also declared himself in full sympathy with the movement in favor of their education, as conducted by his friend and compatriot, Sasipada Banerjee.

LEWIS G. JANES.
President Brooklyn Ethical Association.
Brooklyn, March 12, 1895.

Swamiji's decision to donate the proceeds of his next (and extra) lecture in Brooklyn to Sasipada Banerjee was his own and was prompted, no doubt, not only by a desire to make his position regarding the education of Hindu widows clear but by Banerjee's need for help in his work. This incident is mentioned somewhat inaccurately and without reference to the Brooklyn controversy, in the first edition of "The Life," where it is stated that Swamiji gave over "the proceeds of his lecture on 'The Ideals of Hindu Women,' delivered before the Ethical Association of Brooklyn, to its President, to be forwarded by him to Babu Sashipada Banerjee's Baranagore Boarding School for Hindu Widows." (It was, as we now know, not until long after the lecture on "The Ideals of Hindu Women" that Banerjee entered the picture.) "The Life" continues: "In forwarding the proceeds Dr. Lewis G. Janes wrote to Sashipada Babu as follows: 'This sum constitutes the proceeds of a lecture before our Association by your able countryman, the Swami Vivekananda, who has spoken for us several times before large audiences and created great interest in the Vedanta philosophy and also in the social and political conditions in India. In justice to the Swami I should say that the proposition to give a benefit lecture for your school was his own voluntary idea with which we were delighted to co-operate.' "

But despite all evidence and despite Dr. Janes' explanation that Swamiji was *not* opposed to the education of Hindu women but, on the contrary, was in favor of it, Mrs. McKeen could never forgive Swamiji for having stated 1) that Hindu widows inherited their husbands' wealth, and 2) that they were not ill-treated. These statements had come as a severe shock to a deeply rooted pattern of thought which was not peculiar to the Ramabai Circle, but was common to a generation brought up on Christian missionary propaganda. Swamiji was fighting a nation-wide psychological necessity for a sustained belief

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in the degraded state of the Oriental races—a belief which had given sanction to Western imperialism and provided a satisfying glow of self-righteousness and superiority such as little else could. But Swamiji's visit to America had been well timed, for by the 1890's there was a growing segment of the people who heard his lectures with relief and rejoicing, who championed him and whom he championed. It was Robert Ingersoll, the famous agnostic, who pointed out to him: "Forty years ago you would have been hanged if you had come to preach in this country, or you would have been burned alive. You would have been stoned out of the villages if you had come even much later." Ingersoll cautioned Swamiji to be careful even in 1895. Contemplating the ire of Mrs. McKeen, who was representative of thousands, one can well see why. The Ramabai Circle, like the missionary circles, did not hesitate to invent and spread scandals about him. In March 21 Swamiji wrote to Mrs. Bull: "I am astonished to hear the scandals the Ramabai circles are indulging in about me. Among others, one item is that Mrs. Bagley of Detroit had to dismiss a servant-girl on account of my bad character!!! Don't you see, Mrs. Bull, that however a man may conduct himself, there will always be persons who invent the blackest lies about him. At Chicago I had such things every day against me! And these women are invariably the very Christian of Christians!"

Although Dr. Janes did his best to clarify Swamiji's position, the Ramabai Circle became only further aroused. Mrs. McKeen's next interview with the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* appeared on April 6 and read as follows:

SHE PLEADS FOR CHILD WIDOWS

Mrs. James McKeen Replies to Dr. Janes.

Hindu Law Givers are Quoted

A Suspicion that the Handsome Monk Vivekananda,
Who Criticizes the Pundita Ramabai's Methods
Has Hypnotized the Women of Boston.

The Position of Lecturer Sasipada Banerjee,
Now in Brooklyn.

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The Brooklyn Ethical society has issued a card of invitation to the public to attend a lecture to be given by Swami Vivekananda on Sunday evening, when a collection will be taken in behalf of the Hindu Widows' home, conducted by Babu Sasipada Banerjee, near Calcutta. This announcement revives the question of Swami Vivekananda's attitude toward the question of the treatment of child widows in India and the recent controversy, printed from time to time in the Eagle, between Mrs. James McKeen of this city and Dr. Janes of the Ethical society over the Pundita Ramabai and her teachings. Mrs. McKeen was seen yesterday at her home, 136 Henry street, and was asked whether there was any reply to Dr. Janes' last letter, printed in the Eagle. Mrs. McKeen, who is the manager of the Brooklyn Ramabai circle, said:

"If the whiff of controversy between Dr. Janes and myself shall result in a substantial contribution to this great charity I can only paraphrase the prayer book and exclaim: 'The Lord has indeed granted us a happy issue out of all our troubles!' But it is difficult to understand why it was necessary to preclude [?] all this with a declaration that the young widows of Hinduism were not ill treated by a settled custom of religious prejudice, as we maintain, and that 'their property rights were superior to those guaranteed to widows in this country, giving them absolute control of their inheritance in their husbands' and patrimonial estates.' As to their property rights, the proof is abundant on every side that they have no rights of inheritance at all. We have, in the first place, the laws of their great law giver, Manu, which are still enforced, and did not need to be increased in severity to suit degenerate times. In Manu v: 147-156: 'In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her son; a woman must never be independent.' Again, Devendra N. Das, a Hindu, writing in the Nineteenth Century Magazine of September, 1886, tells us, quite in conformity with this law of Manu: 'Among Hindus a woman cannot inherit any paternal property, and if a widow is left any property by her husband she cannot call it her own. All her wealth belongs to her son if she have any, and if she have none she is made to adopt

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an heir and give to him all her property directly he comes of age, and herself lives on a bare allowance granted by him. To a Hindu widow death is a thousand times more welcome than her miserable existence.'

"Mr. James Wilson, a close friend and supporter of Mr. Banerjee, says of the 'Widows' Home' in his 'Female Education in Bengal': 'This is, perhaps, the boldest experiment yet undertaken by Mr. Banerjee and can only be carried on by generous support. The widows themselves are not in a position to meet the expenses even of board and clothing.' In the annual report of the school itself for 1893 it said: 'Considering the unfortunate position of widows in this country their case is one purely to call forth sympathy.' And the Indian Magazine of London, 1889, in recording a visit made to the school by the arch deacon of Calcutta, says: 'Mr. and Mrs. Banerjee are stimulated by keen sympathy with the sad condition of so many young widows.' Again in Manu, v: 157-158, we read: 'Let the widow emaciate her body by living on pure flowers, roots and fruits. Until death let her be patient of hardships.' Why is it especially enjoined among the duties of a widow to 'be patient of hardships' if there are none that belong especially to her position? In 'Few Notes on the Life and Work of Sasipada Banerjee' we find speaking of the Hindu widows they 'with the spread of education and better ideas now feel it hard to continue subject to the austerities of a widow's life.'

"It seems to those who know well and have long known the unspeakable sufferings of a young and childless widow in India, as if we were trying to prove the existence of the sun in the firmament. It is a fact well known to all who are not willfully blind. There is a point in Dr. Janes' letter of March 3 that puzzles the understanding. He says: 'Nor will the lofty and not altogether reprehensible pride of the Brahmin permit him to be the recipient of favors rendered possible by the solicitation of money in distant countries from those of an alien faith. To do this would be contrary to a deep seated religious and social prejudice which, whether we reprobate it or not is an unquestioned fact.' How, then, does it come that a collection is to be taken up at a meeting of the Ethical society for the benefit of Mr. Banerjee's Home

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and School for Widows? Does Dr. Janes mean to imply that the Ethical society has been converted bodily to Hinduism by the eloquent monk and therefore have ceased to be a people of an 'alien faith' from whom the 'not reprehensible pride' of a Hindu forbids him to solicit aid? Some of the women in Boston declare that this handsome Hindu hypnotizes them and we may perhaps excuse the vagaries of our learned Ethical president upon the same ground, for surely nothing less than some such paralyzing power could betray so able a man from the paths of common sense. Our suspicion of hypnotism becomes further strengthened when we read in the same letter of March 3, 'It is not the object aimed at by Ramabai that Swami Vivekananda criticizes, but the methods adopted for collecting money and the impossibility, as he believes, of accomplishing large results in the way proposed.' And Swami Vivekananda is the friend 'of Mr. Banerjee' and 'believes in his work.' Must not Mr. Vivekananda therefore have used some occult means for concealing from the president of his recently converted society that Mr. and Mrs. Banerjee sailed for England the 18th of April, 1871, and when there traveled the length and breadth of the land establishing auxiliary societies in aid of female education in India? One striking result of this journey may be found in Mr. Banerjee's own words in reference to his home for widows, when he says: 'The widows' home could not have gained ground without the help and support of friends in England.' And since in speaking of Mr. Banerjee's faith he calls him a Hindu and commends him for having won the indorsement of many of the best citizens of his own faith—the inference is inevitable that he supposes Mr. Banerjee to be an orthodox Hindu.

"This puzzling question then comes to us to add to our bewilderment: How is it possible that Dr. Janes should not know that the honorary corresponding member of the Brooklyn Ethical association, Mr. Sasipada Banerjee, is just as much a heretic and outlaw to the orthodox Hindu as Ramabai herself? The hottest persecution Mr. Banerjee ever encountered was not when he first began befriending widows, nor when he established his girls' school, but when, in July, 1865, he gave up idolatry and caste and threw off the

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sacred Brahminical thread. In the following August a meeting of orthodox Hindus was held 'to take organized steps to persecute him.' Day and night meetings were held to put him and his wife to all sorts of inconvenience. Not a friend to help or a kind word from any quarter, Mr. Wilson on 'Female Education in Bengal' [sic]. An Englishman's letter in the India Minor [Indian Mirror?] of that day says, 'A sudden stop was now put to the progress of the school by the fact of the founder having embraced Brahmoism. For months no girl came to his school except his niece.'

"But we are compelled to give up the whole mass of objection to Ramabai as incomprehensible when we read again in Dr. Janes' letter of March 3 that the work of Babu Sasipada Banerjee is commended because 'It has been conducted quietly and without ostentation,' and the Pundita's is condemned because it has not been carried on quietly and without ostentation. Surely this good doctor must be under some malign influence. From every publication concerning the work of Mr. Banerjee comes the report of patronage from the very beginning of his schools, of lords and ladies, archdeacons and bishops—presents from members of the royal family, letters of congratulation from the queen. That Mr. Banerjee has kept himself well informed as to every avenue of possible help we very well know who received applications of aid from him in almost the very beginning of Ramabai's enterprise. And far from condemning him, we approve his methods. Indeed, it was probably from his visit to England that Ramabai obtained the hint she so modestly followed here. The Bombay Educational Review, published by the government, says: 'What epithet we wonder should be applied to the journey to America of an unprotected Hindoo widow, to her loving reception by American ladies, to the formation of Ramabai circles, to the return of the wanderer to India and finally to the installation of the Sharada Sadana in a building of its own worth 45,000 rupees. Romantic is no word for it! It is gratifying to know that all that is best in native society is in hearty sympathy with the work of this gifted and brave Maratha lady.'

"The Pundita Ramabai was a pupil and friend of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. It was from books lent her by

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this great teacher that she first learned of Christianity. It was from him also that Mr. Banerjee first received his spiritual impulse. Chunder Sen was the founder of an eclectic theistic society, as much noted for its piety as the Neo-Hindus, to whom Vivekananda belongs, are noted for what his admirers call 'freedom of soul.' I have searched in vain through several published accounts of the life and work of Mr. Banerjee, looking for some mention of Sanyasi monks among his friends and helpers. He mentions in great detail very many trifling acts of friendship as well as more substantial support. I have failed to find any allusion to Sanyasi monks, unless, indeed, they figure without name among the bands of orthodox who organized to persecute him when he joined the Brahmo Samaj. Indeed, the Unity and the Minister, the official organ of the Brahmo Samaj, the society to which Mr. Banerjee belongs, in Calcutta, goes so far as to say they know Babu Norendra Nath Dutt (alias Vivekananda), better as an actor on the stage of the Nava-Vindavan theater than as a philosopher. The Ethical society publishes many extracts from Hindu papers commending their protege, but they seem entirely to ignore the criticisms of other Indian periodicals of high standing. The Indian review ridicules the idea that Vivekananda should be supposed to be preaching Hinduism. It says his moral philosophy was taught him at a Christian college in Calcutta and the Unity and the Minister, from which we quoted above, goes on to say: 'Any follower of modern Hinduism (referring to Vivekananda) cannot command that respect from us which we entertain for a genuine orthodox Hindu.' "

IV

The above article constituted the last of the published statements made by Mrs. McKeen and Dr. Janes, and to that section of the reading public which had been conditioned to think the worst of India it might have appeared that Mrs. McKeen had had the last word. First, Dr. Janes had not sufficiently clarified the actual position of the young and childless widows in India, with whose lot the Ramabai Circle was largely concerned. Second, although he had established the fact that

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Swamiji was not opposed to the education of Hindu women, he had not clearly explained the reasons why Swamiji did not approve of Ramabai's methods of raising funds. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, moreover, did not seem altogether unbiased in presenting the controversy, and Janes' position was not helped by the paper's misquotations and falsification of dates. Nor did the hysteria to which Mrs. McKeen was reduced in her last letter, in which she accused Swamiji of hypnotism, serve to clarify matters. Thus, all in all, the controversy as it stood was inconclusive and, to say the least, confusing.

As will be seen later, in one climactic lecture Swamiji put an end to all the haggling over the pros and cons of whether or not widows were mistreated in India. This was not done, however, by a point-by-point answer to his opponents, and therefore, as far as the present reader is concerned, the issues in question were left, as it were, in mid-air. In fairness to Dr. Janes, it should be mentioned that he later prepared a full answer to Mrs. McKeen. A letter from Mrs. Bull to Mary Hale, which has only recently come to light and which is dated April 16, 1895, reads in part:

> I am going to quote from a letter just received, which will interest you as it comes from a man of fine mind and character, and whose friendship and commendation are of value. He is President of the Ethical Society of Brooklyn —Dr. Janes—and he says: "It is a great gratification to me that the Swami has been with us in Brooklyn and the final outcome of his lectures and the little controversy with our Ramabai friends is sure to bring broader and juster view of the religions, philosophy and social life of the Hindus. . . . I have prepared a full reply to Mrs. McKeen's communication to the *Eagle* with ample quotations from the code of Manu and the reliable authorities, which ought *completely* to dispose of the legal questions raised by the Brooklyn critics. My article is rather long and I am not sure that the *Eagle* will print it, but I shall try in some way to bring it before our Brooklyn public. In the *North American Review* of October, 1888, you will find an interesting article on 'Child Marriage in India,' by Babu Raj Coomar Ray, a kinsman of Keshab Chunder Sen and Mozoomdar, an Honorary corresponding member of the Brooklyn Ethical Association. It coincides entirely with the Swami's view."

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But the Brooklyn *Eagle* evidently did not publish Dr. Janes' article, and the reading public was none the wiser. Thus, since Swamiji's position was not adequately presented and since he himself altogether refused to engage in a petty debate, it would not be amiss for us to attempt to unravel, at least to some extent, the threads of the controversy.

The main point of contention between the Ramabai Circle and Dr. Janes, who represented Swamiji, was, of course, the position of widows in Hindu society. According to the women of the Circle, who had obtained their information directly from the sensational lectures and book of Ramabai, the vast majority of high caste Hindu widows, particularly young widows, were cruelly treated, persecuted and forced to live a life of abject poverty, loneliness and disgrace. This ill-treatment, they contended, was not sporadic but was decreed by Hindu law and custom and was therefore habitual and universal. Contending thus, the Ramabai Circle automatically condemned Hindu society as having willfully and inhumanly degraded a whole class of women.

Dr. Janes, on the other hand, upheld Swamiji's categorical denial that Hindu widows as a class were the degraded and persecuted objects of social scorn that Ramabai had made them out to be. As Swamiji's representative, he admitted that sporadic and exceptional cases of ill-treatment of widows might exist, for in every country and in every social system deviations from the norm are inevitable. However, as Dr. Janes pointed out, it was not Swamiji's purpose to dwell on the "nether" side of Indian civilization, but rather to present its best and most characteristic features.

Mrs. McKeen was not satisfied with this. The purpose of the Ramabai Circle was to be benefactor not merely to a few exceptional cases of ill-treated widows, but to an entire class. According to Mrs. McKeen's own brand of logic, she had spent the past six years soliciting funds for this class; therefore it must exist. Moreover, the numerous hair-raising reports she had heard regarding the condition of Hindu widows had further convinced her that, just as Ramabai had said, they were persecuted and degraded by a *settled custom* that applied in all cases.

These two viewpoints—Mrs. McKeen's and Dr. Janes'—were so diametrically opposed that obviously both could not be correct. It is clear to us today, and it was clear to Dr. Janes, that Swamiji's simple statement to the effect that widows as a class were not mistreated was far more valid than were pages of Mrs. McKeen's "testimony."

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Swamiji, being a Hindu who had recently come from India, was certainly in a position to know the true conditions of Hindu society. Moreover, as Dr. Janes well knew, his integrity and his ability to form a clear judgment regarding so complicated a matter as Indian society were beyond dispute. But while these things were apparent to Dr. Janes, many readers of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* might have been reluctant to accept Swamiji's simple undocumented statement as an adequate contradiction to Mrs. McKeen's "facts."

The apparent weakness of the presentation of Swamiji's position lay in the fact that although Dr. Janes had done his noble best he had failed to make one all-important point clear, without a knowledge of which one could not possibly pass judgment upon the life of Hindu widows. The fact was that *the life of the Hindu widow, rich or poor, young or old, was one of extreme religious asceticism, that is to say, of poverty and self-denial.* It is the confirmed and not unjustifiable belief of the Hindu that without self-mortification moral and spiritual values cannot be acquired. The widow's life is, by custom, one in which spiritual and moral values are held to be supreme, and therefore it is, by custom, austere. To an outsider, unaware of this fact or without sympathetic understanding of it, such a life would appear to be incontrovertible evidence of the Hindus' cruelty to and mistreatment of their women. But to those who understood it the widows' life would appear as something entirely different from that portrayed by Ramabai.

In Hindu society the widows represented an informal order of nuns, who, though not secluded in convents, lived in every essential respect the life of monastics. If such lives could be thought of as evidences of ill-treatment, then with equal justification one could consider the austere and rigorous lives of Christian nuns to be evidences of Christian cruelty. In both cases the life was one of hardship, but also in both cases it was one traditionally endured for the sake of a lofty religious ideal. Traditionally, the Hindu widow divested herself of jewelry, donned coarse cloth and cut her hair. Nunlike, she subsisted on plain fare, slept on a hard bed and did not join in the secular festivities of the family. But while observing these hard rules of widowhood, which could not be violated, she was treated with the utmost tenderness and sympathy by her parents or in-laws and was helped to endure the disciplines of her life and to grow strong in their observance.

Child widows, of whom there were not many, but with whom

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Ramabai was particularly concerned, were, in the vast majority of cases, naturally given as much love and care as were other daughters of the family, and while they may not have at first understood the reasons for observing the rules of widowhood, those rules were made as easy as possible for them to follow and in no sense involved servitude, isolation or degradation. Child marriage was, of course, in itself, frowned upon by Swamiji. "I hate the very name of marriage in regard to a boy or girl," he wrote in May of 1895 to Swami Saradananda. And again, on December 23, 1895, "I have a strong hatred of child-marriage. I have suffered terribly from it and it is the great sin for which our nation has to suffer. . . . I must set my foot to the best of my ability upon this devilish custom of child marriage. . . . I can kill the man who gets a husband for a baby." But while Swamiji deplored the custom of child marriage, it did not follow that girls who were widowed were cruelly treated or that, not remarrying, their lives were henceforth blighted. To Swamiji, as to most Hindus, a married life was not the end and all of human aspiration. In India the life of spiritual renunciation, which the widow undertook, was universally considered to be a far more exalted and fruitful life than that of matrimony, and while the dedicated life of the widow was, to be sure, never one of comfort, its reward was great. The remarkable fact was that the widow, whatever her previous disposition may have been, often developed the prized qualities of endurance, fortitude, selflessness and serenity. Devoting herself to religious practices she became spiritually alive; she was an asset to the community, her leadership and advice were sought after, and she was looked upon by all with respect often amounting to reverence.

As for the economic status of Hindu widows, Swamiji was certainly in a position to give authoritative testimony. Having completed a course in Indian law in the University of Calcutta (refraining only from appearing in the final examination), he was fully versed in inheritance laws, and his statement concerning them was correct. A Hindu widow who had no sons had complete control over her husband's property, and it was to this fact that Swamiji referred when he said: "The whole estate of the deceased husband must go to the wife, personal property absolutely, real property for life." If the widow had sons the real property was divided among them when they came of age. It was unthinkable, however, for a son not to provide as well as possible for his mother. Indeed, the status of the Hindu mother was so high and unassailable that the Hindu lawgivers never thought of

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legislating specifically for her support by her sons. The rare son who did not have enough filial devotion to provide for his mother was prompted by fear of social ostracism to do so. A widow, moreover, had absolute right to whatever gifts of money or property she had received from her husband, parents or other relatives. As Swamiji had said in Detroit: "As to their [the Hindus'] property laws, the wife's dowry belongs to her exclusively, never becoming the property of the husband. She can sell or give away without his consent. The gifts from any one to herself, including those of the husband, are hers alone, to do with as she pleases." It was, of course, a fact that in India, as in any country, a widow whose parents and husband had been poor and who had no sons to provide for her was generally left without means of self-support. But in this case she was *always* taken care of by either her in-laws or her own relatives. She often, particularly if she was young, returned to her parents' home and there entered the communal life of the family, not as an object of charity or of scorn, but as a respected member of the group.

Although it was true that women did not inherit anything from their fathers (in this respect Dr. Janes misquoted Swamiji, who had not mentioned patrimonial inheritance), it was not true that their fathers ignored them. It may not have been known to Mrs. McKeen and her kind, but Hindu parents were also very affectionate to their daughters and, in lieu of a legacy, provided them with as big a dowry as possible, often going into debt to do so. Furthermore, parents adorned their daughters on the eve of their marriage with as many gold ornaments as they could, all of which were inviolably theirs. Even in times of emergency a Hindu husband would be reluctant to ask his wife to sell her jewelry. Indeed, throughout their married life he himself bestowed upon her as many gold bangles and other ornaments as he was able, so that in case of her widowhood she would have a treasure to fall back upon.

If the stories the Ramabai Circle had assiduously collected regarding the ill-treatment of child widows were true and correctly interpreted, which is unlikely, they pertained to cases so exceptional as to be ruled out as valid testimony. As for the laws of Manu which Mrs. McKeen so triumphantly quoted, even Ramabai had pointed out that the old laws of India protected women. Had Mrs. McKeen been genuinely interested in the subject, she could have found with a little research such verses in Manu as: "Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers, husbands, brothers, and brothers-in-law,

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ciple, are averse to anything that smells of religion, thought this Hindu monk was an easy match for them, and that all his theology would be crushed under the weight of Western civilization, Western philosophy, and Western science. So sure were they of their triumph, that they invited him, in New York, to lecture before their Society, anxious to show to their numerous followers how easily religious claims can be refuted by the powerful arguments of their logic and pure reasoning. I shall never forget that memorable evening when the Swami, accepting the challenge, appeared single-handed, to face the matadors of materialism, all arrayed with their heaviest armour of law, and reason, and logic, and commonsense, of matter, and force, and heredity, and all the stock phrases calculated to awe and terrify the ignorant mass. Imagine their surprise and consternation when they found that, far from being intimidated by these big words he proved himself a master in wielding their own weapons, and as familiar with the arguments of materialism, as with those of the Advaita philosophy. He showed them that their much vaunted Western civilization consisted principally in the development of the art to destroy their fellowmen, that their Western science could not answer the most vital questions of life and being, that their immutable laws, so much talked of, had no outside existence apart from the human mind, that the very idea of matter was a metaphysical conception, and that it was the much despised metaphysics upon which ultimately rested the very basis of their materialism. With an irresistible logic he demonstrated that their knowledge proved itself incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws upon which it depends for its basis; that pure reasoning could not help admitting its own limitations and pointed to something beyond reason; and that rationalism when carried to its last consequences must ultimately land us at a something which is above matter, above force, above sense, above thought and even consciousness, and of which all these are but the manifestations:—"Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor the fire; through Him they all shine."

The powerful effect of this lecture could be seen on the following day, when numbers of the materialistic camp came

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to sit at the feet of the Hindu monk and listen to his sublime utterances on God and religion.

But while Swamiji always opposed and corrected falsehood wherever he found it, never accommodating himself or his message to the dictates of others, and while the word "power" has been often used in describing him, it should never be forgotten that the power he exerted over the minds of others had its source in profound inner peace and was, for this very reason, irresistible and beneficent. Though we have spoken of his battles with Presbyterian ministers, Ramabai Circles and the like, these controversies were but small waves on the vast and fathomless ocean of his mind and, paradoxical as it may seem, the more dynamic his outward expression the deeper was his inner calm. One is reminded in this connection of the answer he gave to his Hindu disciple, Chakravarti, when the latter asked: "Well, sir, did not the bigoted Christians oppose you?" "Yes, they did," Swamiji replied. "When people began to honour me, then the padres came after me. They spread slander about me by publishing it in the newspapers. Many asked me to contradict these things. But I never took the slightest notice of them. It is my firm conviction that no great work is accomplished in this world by low cunning; so without paying any heed to these vile reports, I used to work steadily at my mission. The upshot was that often my slanderers, feeling repentant, would surrender to me. They would themselves contradict the slander in the papers and would offer apologies. . . . The fact is, my son, this whole world is full of mean ways of worldliness. But men of real moral courage and discrimination are never deceived by these. Let the world say what it chooses, I shall tread the path of duty—know this to be the line of action for a hero."

To best understand the spirit in which Swamiji started and conducted his work in New York, one has to remember that a year and a half of mixing with hundreds and thousands of people had created within him, on the one hand, a strong desire to bless and enlighten the common man, and, on the other hand, a resistance to public life and a need to throw off the restricting and defiling circumstances of a traveling lecturer. By the time he arrived at New York he felt a great urge to teach Americans and, simultaneously, as great an urge to live once again the unfettered life of a Hindu monk. To Swamiji the satisfaction of both these urges was possible. Breaking away from the surroundings and demands of his rich and fashionable friends, he took up his own quarters and there lived the austere and spiritually intense life of the

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sannyasin. Not only did he remain in a high state of spiritual consciousness, but he would plunge at the slightest opportunity into the depths of meditation. He would recite texts from Sanskrit scriptures, he would repeat the name of God, or caught up in a mood of divine love he would sing devotional songs from the depths of his heart. And who can say how many hours in the silence of the night he remained lost in the abyss of divine union, or what experiences were his while the world slept? As is known, it was Swamiji's habit to sleep only an hour or two in the twenty-four, and when one thinks of his exalted state one cannot but feel that he lived both day and night on the very edge of the Infinite. "He literally radiated spirituality. . . . An atmosphere of benediction, of peace, of power and of inexpressible luminosity was felt by one and all who came to his classes."

"One sees him in his New York retreat," reads "The Life," "in the morning or the evening quiet, or at dead of night, meditating. Oftentimes he was lost in meditation, his unconsciousness of the external betraying his complete absorption within." Or, surrounded by a group of vivacious talkers, his "eyes would grow fixed, his breath would come slower and slower till there would be a pause and then a gradual return to consciousness of his environment." Swamiji's friends understood his habit of falling into meditation and respected it—indeed, none would dare intrude with chatter upon that deep, majestic silence. "If he was found in a room, in silence, no one disturbed him, though he would sometimes rise and render assistance to an intruder, without breaking the train of thought." Even while holding a class, he would plunge into profound contemplation. "When the Swami emerged from such states," "The Life" relates, "he would feel impatient with himself, for he desired that the Teacher should be uppermost in him, rather than the Yogi. In order to avoid repetitions of such occurrences, he instructed one or two how to bring him back by uttering a word or a Name, should he be carried by the force of meditation into Samadhi."

One can well imagine that to attend Swamiji's classes was no simple matter. To come suddenly from a cluttered, urban life and from noisy, winter-dreary streets into the rarefied atmosphere of his rooms, which literally vibrated with spiritual power, peace and joy, to be day after day in the presence of a radiant prophet and to have one's mind suddenly lifted and expanded to where it might behold a realm never dreamed of before, was an experience that could be overwhelming. But it was Swamiji's greatness as a teacher to guide his students so that their bodies

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and minds became fit vessels to receive the almost terrible gift of his awakening power.

He gave to everyone: lecturing, teaching, talking, even scolding. Nor did he save his bounty for his friends or students alone. The tramp in the street was to him as worthy of his love and blessings as the most qualified spiritual aspirant. One recalls Sister Christine's memories of Swamiji in New York, and though she speaks of a later year than that with which we are concerned, her story can no doubt be applied also to 1895. "Once," she writes, "there was a pitiful little group that clung to him with pathetic tenacity. In the course of a walk he had gathered up first one and then another. This ragged retinue returned with him to the house on 58th [?] Street which was the home of the Vedanta Society. Walking up the flight of steps leading to the front door the one beside him thought, 'Why does he attract such queer abnormal people?' Quick as a flash he turned and answered the unspoken thought, 'You see, they are Shiva's demons.' "

When Swamiji was not holding classes and lectures or giving private instruction or meditating, he spent much of his time in the study of Western life and knowledge. As always, everything pertaining to humanity interested him, and, as always, he read prodigiously, retaining all he read and relating every facet of man's life and thought to spiritual ideals. In the spring of 1895 he was also organizing his work in India by means of innumerable letters. Indeed this period was one of intense activity in this regard, and his work of planning, of finding practical solutions to India's complex problems, and of directing and inspiring his brother monks and disciples, was in itself a stupendous task. But in the midst of furious work, of teaching, giving lectures, studying, carrying on a voluminous correspondence, in the midst of bitter opposition, and of adulation from both those who looked upon him as "a social lion" and those who knew his true worth, he remained always in the blissful repose that asked nothing of and took nothing from the world.

It is only through understanding Swamiji's unbroken, luminous serenity and his immense, all-embracing love that one can understand the quality of his power. He moved the tides of man's thought much as "the innocent moon, that nothing does but shine, moves all the labouring surges of the world." Going his own way, he had altered the course of history. " 'Go thou thy way, Sannyasin!' " he had written to Mary Hale, quoting Bhartrihari. " 'Some will say, who is this mad man? Others, who is this Chandala? Others will know thee to be a

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sage. Be glad at the prattle of worldlings.' But when they attack, know that the elephant passing through the market-place is always beset by curs, but he cares not. He goes straight on *his own way*. So it is always, when a great soul appears there will be numbers to bark after him."

Almost a whole nation had barked after Swamiji, but he had strode on unperturbed, chastising where it was necessary with one or two well-directed blows, awakening and quickening the minds of thousands, and bestowing his blessings upon friend and foe alike. Both America and Swamiji had changed from a year and a half's contact with each other. The eyes of the country had been opened to a new vista of thought, and the living seed of spirituality had been firmly planted in the souls of the people, where it would inevitably grow. Swamiji himself had developed and given form to many of his ideas, he had learned the need of the West for the philosophy of Vedanta and he had seen how that philosophy could be applied to every problem of modern man. He was now ready to nurture the seed he had planted into a sturdy tree whose roots would strike deep and whose branches would give shelter to the world.

II

Swamiji's life from the spring of 1895 forward is well known, and his teachings have been amply recorded. Toward the end of the year his American devotees engaged the services of Mr. J. J. Goodwin, who was able to transcribe his lectures and class talks accurately, and it is to his faithful and tireless service that we owe most of the lectures that have been published in "The Complete Works." Other records of Swamiji's life and teachings dating from 1895 to his death on July 4, 1902, are available in the form of letters, memoirs, notes of lectures and talks, and complete records of conversations. Thus my particular task, which was to tell only of the early and heretofore little-known period of his American visit, is finished.

But though my narrative has come to an end, one vital question remains unanswered. The reader will remember that in the last section of Chapter Eight I attempted to discover the true significance of Swamiji's lecture tour through the Midwest and the East. By studying what he himself said and did, I found that the idea of teaching Vedanta to the West did not evolve in his mind until the latter part of 1894 and that prior to that time the apparent motives that had guided him were

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twofold: (1) to raise funds for the development of his Indian work and incidentally to provide for his own support during his stay in this country, and (2) to give the American people a correct idea of Hinduism, to remove current misconceptions regarding his motherland and to inculcate a spirit of religious tolerance. But while these were motives not unworthy of Swamiji's great patriotism and intellectual genius, they were not, one must concede, commensurate with his spiritual stature. I was forced, therefore, to recognize that his tour had another and more fundamental meaning and concluded that during his travels he was, consciously or unconsciously, fulfilling the function of a divine prophet to America—scattering the seeds of spirituality wherever he went and bestowing his blessing upon innumerable men and women. As he himself later wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda: "I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will fall, there it will fructify—be it today, or in a hundred years."

This prophetic mission was, of course, not peculiar to Swamiji's lecture tour. Throughout his life, wherever he was and whatever he was outwardly doing, he permanently lifted the consciousness of all with whom he came in contact. It was truly said of him: "Vivekananda is nothing if not a breaker of bondage." His very presence was a profound blessing, and we shall miss the full significance of his activities and teachings if we forget that above all he was a prophet, born—if his Master is to be believed—for the good of mankind. We are not concerned here, however, with his functions as a divine prophet, but rather with the development of his message and his world mission.

If the reader has accepted the view that Swamiji did not come to America with a ready-made message, then the question has no doubt arisen in his mind as to how, why and when it evolved. It is this question which I should like now to discuss and to which I shall try to find as clear an answer as possible. One of the best means of doing this is to search for clues through the foregoing narrative, through Swamiji's letters, both published and heretofore unpublished, and through other available records of his thought prior to 1895.

In making this research I am not unaware of certain handicaps. First, although we are now in possession of more material pertaining to 1893 and 1894 than has been included in the biographies and "The Complete Works," many gaps in our knowledge of the period still remain. Second, the available material consists largely of newspaper reports, in which Swamiji's lectures and talks reach us colored by the minds of the reporters. When we compare these reports with the

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accurate and full transcriptions of his later lectures made by the faithful Goodwin, and compare the press interviews with, for example, the vivid account of his conversations in Annisquam written by Mrs. John Henry Wright, we are forced to recognize that much of the originality and subtlety of his ideas and many of the fresh and shining insights that must have flashed through his lectures, illuminating whole fields of knowledge, were lost upon the general run of reporters—and thus lost to us. The newspaper reports, moreover, are for the most part short. While we are often told by the reporters of Swamiji's clarity and strength of thought, of his genius for imparting new ideas, we are seldom given a verbatim account of those ideas. Lectures that took him two hours to deliver were summarized in one or two columns, and ideas which must have poured forth in torrents were reduced to a trickle. (It should also be mentioned that sometimes Swamiji was deliberately misquoted and misrepresented by hostile writers. But in such cases, his friends, as has been seen, often came to his defense and set matters straight. There is little danger therefore of our being misled in this respect. It is also possible that some fictitious and deleterious reports reached India through the machinations of his enemies, but these also need not concern us here.)

However, despite the above deficiencies, the reports included in this book are on the whole dependable and, when checked for accuracy against Swamiji's letters, serve as invaluable source material. We should in fact be grateful to the reporters for doing as much and as well as they did. They have thrown light not only on the development of Swamiji's mission, but on a great deal more. They have, for instance, given us general information about his activities which we cannot come upon elsewhere. They have also highlighted many small details as to what he said and did, which, while perhaps not always of primary importance, are sources of delight to us, for it is through such small, endearing and revealing glimpses of him that he emerges as a living and vital personality. We should be particularly grateful to the reporters for having given so much attention to his personal appearance, his clothes, his manner, his voice and his way of speaking. Such descriptions bring home to us the fact, sometimes hard to grasp, that Swamiji walked this earth and that he talked to and smiled upon people such as you and me. Apart from contributing these details, the newspapers in their editorials, letter columns and even in their headlines give us an idea of the reaction of the public to the "Hindoo Monk." The reported titles of the lectures, moreover, serve as an index to the ideas he was

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interested in propagating during his tour, and the reported contents of these lectures, though at times regrettably skimpy, are nevertheless revealing of the way in which he dealt with those ideas. We gain, for instance, a fair knowledge of his appraisal and defense of Hinduism and Hindu culture in the face of American criticism; we learn how he attacked Christian bigotry; we see his impact upon the nineteenth-century Western mind and also something of its impact upon him.

While a knowledge of these things serves, I admit, only a subsidiary purpose to our main research, it is, in itself, invaluable to students and devotees of Swamiji, and so, in passing, I would like to refer briefly to some of these contributions of the American press.

It is curious that nowhere else does one find so detailed a description of Swamiji's personality as in the American newspapers. Although Romain Rolland gives us a general picture of him in his "Prophets of the New India" and "The Life" has reproduced a paragraph from the *Phrenological Journal* of New York, in which his measurements are given and head bumps interpreted, the Indian biographies and the memoirs written by people who had known him seem with scrupulous care to avoid describing him. Unfortunately this is also true of the biographies of Sri Ramakrishna's other disciples and those of Sri Ramakrishna himself. Were it not for a few available photographs we should be left completely in the dark in regard to the personal appearance of these great souls. Possibly this oversight is due to the Hindu writers' concern with spiritual rather than physical facts. Yet the Hindu is aware that the devotee never tires of hearing detailed descriptions of the object of his devotion. He wants to know about the shape and size of his eyes, the texture of his hair, the exact hue of his complexion, his height, the build of his body, the quality of his voice, his characteristic gestures, his clothes, his likes and dislikes and so on. In fact, this hunger for knowledge regarding the outer characteristics of the manifestations of God and of the knowers of God is more typically Indian than Western. Why the Hindu biographers of Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciples were so unrealistic in these matters seems, therefore, an unanswerable question. Could it be that the long political subjection of the Hindus has deprived them of that robust idealism which the ancient Hindus possessed to such an extraordinary degree and of which a sense of the real at every level of perception is an integral part?

Be that as it may, the American reporters of the 1890's have happily made up for this lack in regard to Swamiji. Although in some instances

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PALM

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DAWN OF THE WORLD MISSION

I

We have devoted many pages to what may be called the "Ramabai controversy," it being of importance in the history of Swamiji's work in America and also illustrative of his method of dealing with actively hostile groups. The controversy, however, took little of his time and energy. As far as is known at present, between December 30, 1894, and April 8, 1895, Swamiji delivered only seven lectures in Brooklyn (including two parlor lectures). While in his last lecture he had silenced with a thunderbolt of awesome power a whole section of American club women, the focal point of his interest during these months was in New York, or, to speak more accurately, in Manhattan. In order, then, to give a complete picture of his life during the first part of 1895, we must go back in our narrative to Friday, December 28, when he arrived in New York from Cambridge. Unfortunately for our purpose, the New York newspapers of 1895 took scarcely any notice of Swamiji's classes and lectures. It was not until January of 1896 that the reporters began to become aware of the importance of the "Hindu Monk." "The newspapers have taken me up this week," Swamiji wrote to Mr. E. T. Sturdy in January, 1896, "and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year." While Swamiji also "stirred up New York" in the spring of 1895, it was a stir that was not obvious to the journalistic eye, and thus I have been unable to make many "new discoveries" concerning this period. Most of the material and information that follows may be familiar to many readers, it having been gathered from Swamiji's biographies and also from the published memoirs of those who knew him. Yet this period is so important that I do not think a repetition of known facts will be out of order, particularly as they have not heretofore been brought together in one place. I trust, therefore, that the reader will bear with me through the following pages.

Presumably Swamiji spent the week-end of December 28-30 with either Dr. Janes or Mr. Higgins. He was entertained, as has been

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seen, at a reception on Friday evening, and on Sunday he lectured at the Pouch Mansion. A hitherto unpublished letter reveals that he then entrained for Chicago so that he might spend New Year's Day with the Hale family, whom he looked upon as his own. This letter, written to Mrs. Bull on January 3, reads as follows:

Chicago, 3rd January 1895
541 Dearborn Avenue

Dear Mrs. Bull:

I lectured at Brooklyn last Sunday. Mrs. Higgins gave a little reception the evening I arrived and some of the prominent members of the Ethical Society including Dr. Jain [Janes] were there. Some of them thought that such Oriental religious subjects will not interest the Brooklyn public.

But the lecture through the blessings of the Lord proved a tremendous success. About 800 of the elite of Brooklyn were present and the very gentlemen who thought it would not prove a success are trying for organizing a series in Brooklyn. The New York course for me is nearly ready but I do not wish to fix the dates until Miss Thursby comes to New York. As such Miss Phillips who is a friend of Miss Thursby's and who is arranging the New York course for me will act with Miss Thursby in case she wants to get up something in New York.

I owe much to the Hale family and I thought to give them a little surprise by dropping in on New Year's day. I am trying to get a new gown here. The old gown is here but it is so shrunken by constant washings that it is unfit to wear in public.

I am almost confident of finding the exact thing in Chicago.

I hope your father is all right by this time.

With my love to Miss Farmer, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons, and the rest of the holy family, I am ever yours,

Affectionately,
Vivekananda

P. S. I saw Miss Couring at Brooklyn. She was as kind as ever. Give her my love if you write her soon.

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From a paragraph, which, for reasons unknown, has been deleted in the published version of a letter Swamiji wrote on January 20 to Mrs. Bull, on hearing of the death of her father, we learn that he did not return to Brooklyn until January 19. This informative paragraph appears at the close of the letter and reads in the original as follows:

> I am to lecture here [Brooklyn] tonight and two other lectures in the next month. I came in only yesterday. Miss Josephine Lock and Mrs. Adams were very kind to me in Chicago and my debt to Mrs. Adams is simply inexpressible.

As was seen in Swamiji's letter of January 3 to Mrs. Bull, tentative plans were being made for his New York lectures and classes. One can well imagine the many conversations and discussions which must have been held in this regard among his friends, for many matters, both ideal and practical, had to be thought of on the eve of this new venture. There was, for instance, the practical problem of where classes would be held. Obviously, what was called for was a place where Swamiji could be unhampered by the routine of a household, be able to eat, sleep and meditate as he chose and, above all, be free day and night to receive seekers of spiritual truth—in short, a place where he could create the atmosphere of a Himalayan ashrama in the very heart of an American metropolis. Financial matters were also to be considered; for Swamiji, true religious teacher that he was, steadfastly refused to accept fees for his classes or for private instruction. There was also in the offing, as in any organized work of the sort he was about to undertake, the prospect of a great deal of secretarial work.

A more important problem, and one to which Swamiji no doubt gave a great deal of thought, was how to extract the essence of the Vedanta philosophy and way of life from its age-old Indian incrustations and transfer it alive and intact to an American setting. "I want to give them dry, hard reason, softened in the sweetest syrup of love and made spicy with intense work, and cooked in the kitchen of Yoga, so that even a baby can easily digest it," he wrote a year later to Mr. E. T. Sturdy. And to Alasinga: "To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry Philosophy and intricate Mythology and queer startling Psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest

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minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it." It was this task upon which Swamiji was now embarking and one with which his mind must have been preoccupied.

Of these ideas and needs he probably talked with his friends, earlier with Mrs. Bull in Cambridge and now in New York with the Guernseys, Miss Phillips, Miss Farmer, Miss Thursby and others, some of whom understood his purpose, some of whom did not, but all of whom were eager to help. It should be noted in passing that these friends were perhaps members of the New York society which Swamiji had established in November—although an actual organization was nowhere in evidence during either the preparations for his new venture or its beginnings. It was Leon Landsberg, a bachelor and ardent disciple, who was able to give him immediate assistance. In the course of an article concerning Swamiji, the *New York Herald* of January 19, 1896, described Landsberg [then Swami Kripananda] as "a man of middle age, medium height, possessed of a shock of curly hair and a pair of eyes in which the fire of the fanatic burns." Sister Christine, who first met Leon Landsberg at Thousand Island Park, speaks of him in her "Memoirs" at greater length. He was, she writes, "an American by citizenship and a Russian Jew by birth. He had all the great qualities of his race—emotion, imagination, a passion for learning and a worship of genius. . . . His intimate knowledge of Europe, its philosophies, its languages, its culture, gave him a profundity and depth of mind which are rare. He was fiery and picturesque. His indifference to his personal appearance, his fanaticism, his pity for the poor, which amounted to a passion, drew Swamiji to him. He often gave his last penny to a beggar, and always he gave not out of his abundance, but out of a poverty almost as great as the recipient's."

Giving up all other activities, Landsberg took over, with characteristic intensity, the burden of the practical details of Swamiji's work. He rented rooms, volunteered to take charge of irksome secretarial matters and to become, all in all, Swamiji's right-hand man. On January 23 Landsberg wrote to Isabelle McKindley as follows:

144 Madison Ave
New York, Jan'y 23d 95

Dear Madam,

I received your kind note with express notice, for which many thanks.

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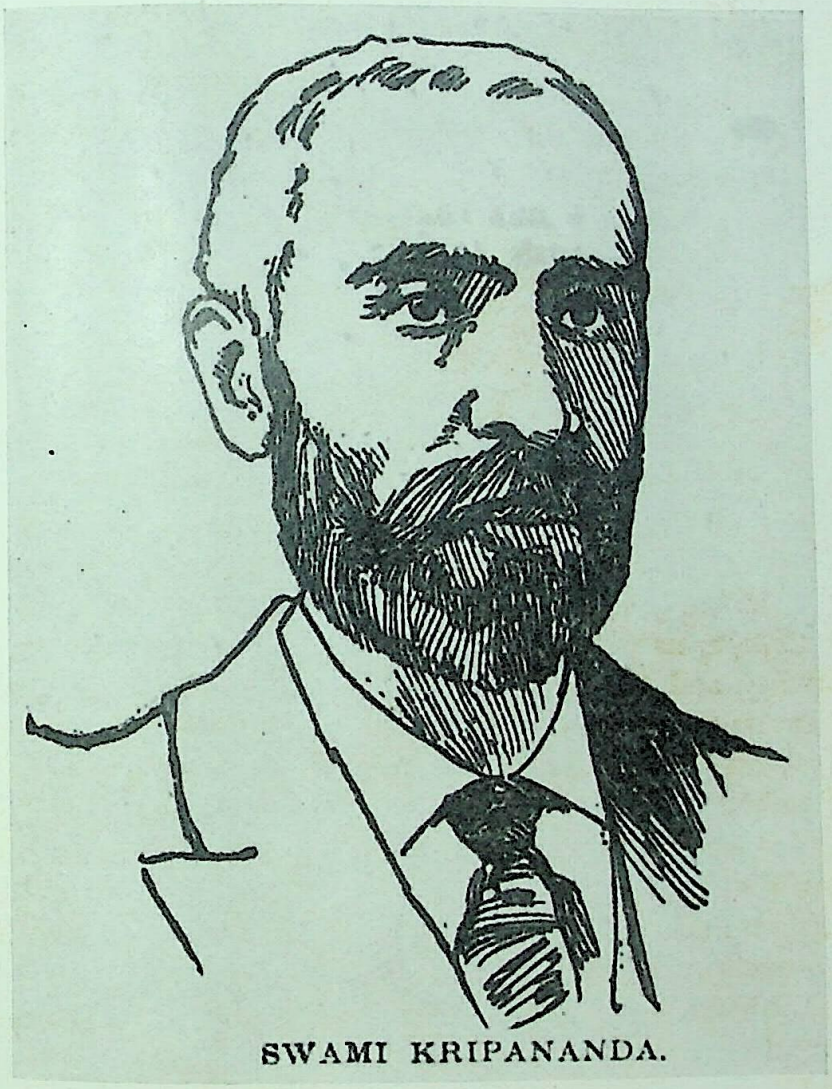

SWAMI KRIPANANDA.

LEON LANDSBERG

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That I am ready to comply with your wishes *va sans dire*. You are the Swami's friend, and this is sufficient reason for me to do anything in my power to please you. So if there is anything I can do for you, know that my services are always at your command.

I mailed to you two newspapers containing reports of the Swami's Brooklyn lectures. His last lecture on "Ideal Women" was a success. He was at his best. He has to hold two more lectures before the Brooklyn Ethical Association, besides several parlour lectures. He gains daily more friends. I am sure that his sojourn in New York will not only add to his glory, but also leave a permanent impress on all those who are favored to hear him.

Miss Thursby and Miss Farmer are arranging parlour lectures for New York.

It will interest you to learn that I have rented two rooms, one for me and the other to serve as the Swami's headquarters, which we are going to occupy from Sunday next. The Swami will board and sleep at the Guernseys, and only use new engaged room as his business office and to hold group meetings in Yoga. It would therefore be advisable to address your letters to the new place, 54 West 33d Street, where I shall be constantly present to receive them, and to answer all the inquiries concerning the Swami.

Don't you think that this was a good idea?

The Swami is in good health and happy, and in speaking of you and your family he has only words of love and blessings.

With kindest regards
Very sincerely,
Yours
Leon Landsberg

It might be noted here parenthetically that while Swamiji was surely happy, he was not altogether in good health. In a letter to Isabelle McKindley, written three days after the above, Landsberg admitted that Swamiji had been suffering from a series of colds, and Swamiji himself wrote to Isabelle McKindley on the 24th of January, "I have got again a little cold." Traveling back and forth in the last week of January across the Brooklyn bridge in the bitterness of a New York winter did not perhaps make matters any better.

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But a cold was no deterrent to Swamiji's plans. Everything had at last been arranged, and on Sunday, January 27, he moved into the two humble rooms that Landsberg had rented at 54 West 33rd Street and there, most probably on January 28, started his classes on Vedanta and Yoga, which were to become so famous and which constituted the very heart of the second phase of his work in the West. Although in April he thought of moving to another location, he kept his lodgings at West 33rd Street until June.

54 West 33rd Street was a brownstone rooming house just off Fifth Avenue on the south side of the street. In the 1890's this was none too good a neighborhood. On the West Side the rich and fashionable had moved north beyond 59th Street. Trade was sweeping up Fifth Avenue well past 33rd, and most of the once luxurious old homes had been replaced by business buildings or converted into inexpensive lodging houses. Worse, the district known as the "Tenderloin" (a district of ill repute) now embraced the area from Madison Square to 48th Street, between Fifth and Ninth Avenues. There remained, however, islands of respectability in this deteriorating neighborhood. Miss Mary Phillips, for instance, lived at 19 West 39th Street, in a block that was undoubtedly respectable, if not fashionable, and the block in which Landsberg had rented rooms was no doubt of equal, though shabby, gentility. Across the street from these rooms the brand-new Waldorf Hotel of opulent splendor reared its towers thirteen stories high; and although a hotel, however grand, did not render the surroundings residentially select, it no doubt saved them from total disrepute.

It has been generally taken for granted that Landsberg and Swamiji chose such unfashionable quarters because of financial difficulties; and this was no doubt partly the case. In Sister Devamata's "Memories of India and Indians," however, we are reminded of another reason for the choice of lodging. "When Swami Vivekananda came to New York," she writes, "he encountered a strong racial prejudice, which created many hardships for him both in his public and in his private life. Among other things it was extremely difficult for him to secure a proper lodging. Landladies invariably assured him that they had no feeling themselves, but they were afraid they would lose their boarders or lodgers if they took an Asiatic into the house. This forced the Swami to accept inferior living quarters." But whatever may have been the reason for Swamiji's choice of quarters, some of his well-wishers considered his rooms unthinkable. One remembers,

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for instance, his letter to Mrs. Bull regarding her well-meaning friend, Miss Hamlen, who took it upon herself to organize Swamiji's work:

> Miss Hamlin has been helping me a good deal. She is very kind and, I hope, sincere. She wants me to be introduced to the "right kind of people." This is the second edition of the "Hold yourself steady" business, I am afraid. The only "right sort of people" are those whom the Lord sends—that is what I understand in my life's experience. They alone can and will help me. As for the rest, Lord help them in a mass and save me from them.
>
> Every one of my friends thought it would end in nothing, this my living and preaching in poor quarters all by myself, and that no *ladies will ever come here.* Miss Hamlin especially thought that "she" or "her right sort of people" were *way up* from such things as to go and listen to a man who lives by himself in a poor lodging. But the "right kind" came for all that, day and night, and she too. Lord, how hard it is for a man to believe in Thee and Thy mercies! Shiva! Shiva! Where is the right kind and where is the bad, mother? It is all He! In the tiger and in the lamb, in the saint and sinner all He!

Despite Swamiji's "poor quarters" even his early classes were crowded. We learn of them from several sources, one of which is an account by Miss Ellen Waldo, as quoted in "The Life":

> A few of those who had heard him in Brooklyn now began to go to the place where he lived in New York. It was just an ordinary room on the second floor of a lodging house. The classes grew with astonishing rapidity and as the little room filled to overflowing it became very picturesque. The Swami himself sat on the floor and most of his audience likewise. The marble-topped dresser, the arms of the sofa and even the corner washstand helped to furnish seats for the constantly increasing numbers. The door was left open and the overflow filled the hall and sat on the stairs. And those first classes! How intensely interesting they were! Who that was privileged to attend them can ever forget them! The Swami so dignified yet so simple, so gravely

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earnest, so eloquent, and the close ranks of students, forgetting all inconveniences, hanging breathless on his every word!

It was a fit beginning for a movement that has since grown to such grand proportions. In this unpretentious way did Swami Vivekananda inaugurate the work of teaching Vedanta philosophy in New York. The Swami gave his services free as air. The rent was paid by voluntary subscriptions, and when these were found insufficient, the Swami hired a hall and gave secular lectures on India and devoted the proceeds to the maintenance of the classes. He said that Hindu teachers of religion felt it to be their duty to support their classes and the students, too, if they were unable to care for themselves, and the teachers would willingly make any sacrifice they possibly could to assist a needy disciple.

The classes began in February [?] 1895, and lasted until June; but long before that time they had outgrown their small beginnings and had removed downstairs to occupy an entire parlour floor and extension. The classes were held nearly every morning and on several evenings every week. Some Sunday lectures were also given, and there were "question" classes to help those to whom the teaching was so new and strange that they were desirous to have an opportunity for more extended explanation.

Another recollection of Swamiji's early classes in New York comes from Miss Josephine MacLeod, who became one of his most devoted friends and helpers. She was also, it can be said, his disciple, for though she often declared that she was only his friend, in her own reminiscences she speaks of some instruction she had received from him and of an experience she had as a result of following it. Surely receiving spiritual instruction from Swamiji was enough to make her a disciple. But however that may be, in 1899 Miss MacLeod, who was affectionately known as "Tantine," followed Swamiji to India, where she joined him with a group of American and English disciples. Loving India, she often stayed in her later life at the Belur Math, where the upper floor of a guest house was kept in readiness for her. Her "Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda," which contains memories of her first meeting with him and of his early classes, was published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of December, 1949. But before quoting Miss MacLeod directly, I should like to include an excerpt from the note-

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books of Mme. Paul Verdier, who knew her well and who heard from her lips many recollections of Swamiji not otherwise available. The following notes were made immediately after a conversation in 1947:

> Tantine was living with her sister at Dobbs Ferry on the Hudson about 30 miles from New York. Her sister had two children, a boy and Alberta. She was friendly with Mrs. Dora Roethlisberger, who was very spiritual and also very psychic. . . . Around the 25th of January, 1895, Tantine received a letter from Mrs. Roethlisberger while in Dobbs Ferry, asking her and her sister to come down to New York to hear and see a wonderful man from India. They both came down and on January 29 the three of them went to 54 W. 33rd Street, where Tantine saw Swamiji for the first time.

Of that class held on January 29, which must have been Swamiji's first or second, Miss MacLeod tells in her "Reminiscences":

> On the twenty-ninth of January, 1895, I went with my sister to 54 West 33rd Street, New York, and heard the Swami Vivekananda in his own sitting room where were assembled fifteen or twenty ladies and two or three gentlemen. The room was crowded. All the armchairs were taken so I sat on the floor in the front row. Swami stood in the corner. He said something, the particular words of which I do not remember, but instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth, and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth. From that moment life had a different import. It was as if he made you realize that you were in eternity. It never altered. It never grew. It was like the sun that you will never forget once you have seen.
>
> I heard him all that winter, three days a week, mornings at eleven o'clock. I never spoke to him, but as we were so regular in coming, two front seats were always kept for us in this sitting room of the Swamiji. One day he turned and said: "Are you sisters?" "Yes," we answered. Then he said: "Do you come very far?" We said: "No, not very far—about thirty miles up the Hudson." "So far? That is

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wonderful." Those were the first words I ever spoke to him. . . .

His power lay, perhaps, in the courage he gave others. He did not ever seem to be conscious of himself at all. It was the other man who interested him. "When the book of life begins to open, then the fun begins," he would say. He used to make us realize there was nothing secular in life; it was all holy. "Always remember, you are incidentally an American, and a woman, but always a child of God. Tell yourself day and night who you are. Never forget it." That is what he used to tell us. His presence, you see, was dynamic. You cannot pass that power on unless you have it, just as you cannot give money away unless you have it. You may imagine it, but you cannot do it.

According to Leon Landsberg's letter of January 23 to Isabelle McKindley, Swamiji had planned to board and sleep at the Guernseys', using the rented room only for his classes. Actually, however, as we learn from one of his letters, he generally also ate and slept in his "poor quarters." On February 1 he writes to Mary Hale: "I am living with Landsberg at 54 W. 33rd Street. He is a brave and noble soul, Lord bless him. Sometimes I go to the Guernseys' to sleep." And on February 14 to Mrs. Ole Bull: "I am very happy now. Between Mr. Landsberg and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something, or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I ever was in America."

Evidently life with Landsberg at 54 West 33rd Street was at first harmonious, but later on some difficulty arose, the nature of which remains unknown. According to the Bengali edition of "The Letters," Swamiji wrote on April 25 to Mrs. Bull, "Mr. Landsberg has given up his connection with me." And on May 7, "Landsberg doesn't come [to the classes]. I am afraid he is very much annoyed with me." Later Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale: "Landsberg has gone away to live in some other place so I am left alone—I am living mostly on nuts and fruits and milk, and find it very nice and healthy too." Whatever the cause of Landsberg's defection may have been, Swamiji readily forgave him. "May the Lord bless Landsberg wherever he goes," he wrote again. "He is one of the few sincere souls I had the privilege in this life to come across. All is for good. All conjunc-

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tions are for subsequent disjunction. I hope I will be perfectly able to work alone. The less help from men the more from the Lord!"

But Landsberg shortly returned to his guru. In July we find him at Thousand Island Park, where Swamiji initiated him into sannyasa and gave him the name "Kripananda"—obviously in view of his compassionate nature, "kripa" being Sanskrit for "compassion," and "ananda" for "joy" or "bliss." Much later, Landsberg again deserted his guru and again received only blessings from him. But this takes us far beyond the limits of the present story, for we are concerned here only with the early weeks at 54 West 33rd Street, where Swamiji and Landsberg ate their lentils and barley in peace, where Landsberg attended to Swamiji's business matters, serving him with devotion, and where Swamiji launched into his intense work of holding at least twelve classes a week, of training a few staunch disciples in the life of spirituality and of receiving visits from "poor people who want to learn something."

As Miss Waldo pointed out, Swamiji "gave his services free as air." He had by this time relinquished any attempt to raise money for his Indian work and was satisfied, indeed overjoyed, to cast all financial problems off his shoulders and to live, sannyasin that he was, without thinking of money. It was only to support his classes that he occasionally gave public lectures, holding them at first, not, as Miss Waldo tells, in a hired hall, but on the lower floor of his lodging house. On March 21 he writes to Mrs. Bull: "I am going to have a series of paid lectures in my rooms (downstairs), which will seat about a hundred persons, and that will cover the expenses." In April he gave the lectures known as the "Barbar Lectures," under the patronage of a Mrs. Barbar of Boston. He lectured also before the Dixon Society, and in May, and perhaps also in April, he gave several public lectures in the upper hall of the Mott's Memorial Building. Of these last the titles of two given in May are unfortunately all that we know; the first, delivered on May 13 was entitled "The Science of Religion," and the second, the date of which is not known, "The Rationale of Yoga."

Swamiji may well have given other public lectures in the spring of 1895, and perhaps it was one of these of which Sister Devamata speaks in her "Memories of India and Indians," which ran in several 1932 issues of *Prabuddha Bharata*. Sister Devamata is unfortunately vague as to dates, but the installment in which she recalls her first

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sight of Swamiji seems to pertain to the early months of 1895. She writes:

> One day, as I was walking up Madison Avenue, I saw in the window of the Hall of the Universal Brotherhood a modest sign saying: "Next Sunday at 3 p.m. Swami Vivekananda will speak here on 'What is Vedanta?' and the following Sunday on 'What is Yoga?'" I reached the hall twenty minutes before the hour. It was already over half full. It was not large, however—a long, narrow room with a single aisle and benches reaching from it to the wall; a low platform holding reading desk and chair at the far end; and a flight of stairs at the back. The hall was on the second story and these stairs gave the only way of access to it—audience and speaker both had to make use of them. By the time three o'clock had arrived, hall, stairs, window-sills and railings, all were crowded to their utmost capacity. Many even were standing below, hoping to catch a faint echo of the words spoken in the hall above.
>
> A sudden hush, a quiet step on the stairs and Swami Vivekananda passed in stately erectness up the aisle to the platform. He began to speak; and memory, time, place, people, all melted away. Nothing was left but a voice ringing through the void. It was as if a gate had swung open and I had passed out on a road leading to limitless attainment. The end of it was not visible; but the promise of what it would be shone through the thought and flashed through the personality of the one who gave it. He stood there—prophet of infinitude.
>
> The silence of an empty hall recalled me to myself. Everyone was gone except the Swami and two others standing near the platform. I learned later that they were Mr. and Mrs. Goodyear, ardent disciples of the Swami. Mr. Goodyear made the announcements at the meetings.

I do not know at present when Mr. and Mrs. Walter Goodyear first met Swamiji, but the meeting could have taken place in or before January of 1895, for by that time Swamiji had many friends in New York. We know that in September, 1895, Mr. Goodyear was the American agent for the *Brahmavadin,* the magazine published fort-

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nightly at Swamiji's urging by his Madrasi disciples. This, of course, does not indicate that earlier in the year Mr. Goodyear was handling Swamiji's lectures, and therefore does not help us to determine the date of the lecture of which Sister Devamata speaks. But whether or not the lecture took place in the spring of 1895, it was no doubt of the same type as those that did.

During the first months of his work, Swamiji's classes were concerned largely with jnana yoga and raja yoga. His purpose was never to teach mere philosophy, however lofty, but to lead his students step by step to the highest experience. Thus he trained them not only in the principles of Advaita Vedanta, but in the art and science of spiritual living. "It is the patient upbuilding of character, the intense struggle to *realise* the truth, which alone will tell in the future of humanity," he wrote to Mr. E. T. Sturdy in April of 1895. "So this year I am hoping to work along this line—training up to practical Advaita realisation a small band of men and women." Swamiji enjoined upon his students the need to live the purest and most regulated of lives, to be careful of their diet, to be cautious regarding the company they kept and, in general, to be strictly moral and even austere in their habits. He no doubt instructed many class members individually in the observance of all the details which spiritual practice entails, and, knowing each person through and through at a glance, guided each along the path best suited to him. "His scientific turn of mind," reads "The Life," "gave him a deep insight into the rationale of Yoga exercises; and therefore he could analyse his own experiences and those of his disciples, endeavouring at all times to give a subjective rather than an objective interpretation to the visions and phenomena of meditation; and his counsel was to test everything by reason. Whatever he taught to his disciples he said he himself had experienced."

Into his work Swamiji poured his heart, brain and spirit. "He worked continually and faithfully," Mrs. Bull wrote to Mary Hale in April during a temporary suspension of his classes, "his lectures requiring on his part reading and careful thought. His teaching in class was so clear and gentle in spirit that I felt it to be perhaps the best of all his work. It has served to call together earnest people among those who come to know him, and I hope that a center of work for him in this country may be the permanent result of it all. He is tired now, but rest will soon make all the positive good apparent to him. The real character of the man and his work are now known

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to many and at any time [his work] may be resumed, as there are those who would always gladly welcome and assist him. . . . All who know him love the beauty of his life, and he brings with him the realization of all good and noble endeavour Godward."

These classes were a far cry from "parlor lectures," and it is not unlikely that Swamiji, becoming more and more absorbed in his work of giving intense training to those who came to him for help and guidance, dispensed with the idea of preliminary lectures. At any rate, as far as is now known the "parlor lectures" which, according to Swamiji's letter of January 3 to Mrs. Bull and Landsberg's letter of January 23 to Miss McKindley, were to be arranged by Miss Thursby and Miss Farmer did not take place. In February, however, a Miss Corbin, who was a friend of both Miss Farmer and Miss Thursby, asked Swamiji to hold classes in her home. Swamiji writes of this to Mrs. Bull: "I went to see Miss Corbin the other day, and Miss Farmer and Miss Thursby were also there. We had a nice half hour, and she wants me to hold some classes in her home from next Sunday [February 17]." The Sunday classes at Miss Corbin's, however, lasted approximately one month. On March 21 Swamiji writes to Mrs. Bull: "I went to Miss Corbin's last Saturday [March 16] and told her that I would not be able to come to hold classes any more. Was it ever in the history of the world that any great work was done by the rich? It is the heart and brain that do it ever and ever and not the purse."

From a hitherto unpublished letter that Swamiji wrote to Mr. Francis Leggett, who was later to become his ardent disciple and devoted friend, we learn that Swamiji also held a class, or classes, at the home of a Miss Andrews at 40 West Ninth Street, indicating that he may have held other classes outside his own rooms, of which we at present have no record. His letter reads as follows:

10th April 95

To F. Leggett Esqr.
Dear Friend

It is impossible to express my gratitude for your kindly inviting me to your country seat. I am in a mistake now and find it impossible for me to come tomorrow. Tomorrow I have a class at Miss Andrews of 40. W. 9th Street. As I was given to understand by Miss M'cleod that that class could be postponed I was only too glad to join their company tomorrow. But I find now that Miss M'cleod was mistaken

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and Miss Andrews came to tell me that she can not by any means stop the class tomorrow or even give notice to the members who are about 50 or 60 in number.

In face of this I sincerely regret my inability and hope that Miss M'cleod and Mrs Sturges will understand that it is an unavoidable circumstance and not the will that stands in the way of my taking advantage of your kind invitation.

I will only be too glad to come day after tomorrow or any other day this week as it suits you.

Ever sincerely yours
Vivekananda

(I should mention here that Swamiji's visit to Mr. Leggett's country home did not take place until June.)

While there was no public opposition to Swamiji's work in New York, there were, nevertheless, several classes of people (aside from "the right kind of people") with whom he had to contend. The first of these was the confused rabble of pursuers after the occult, with which New York abounded at the end of the nineteenth century. I believe no better description of the situation can be found than that of Leon Landsberg (then Swami Kripananda) in a letter written on January 12, 1896, to the *Brahmavadin*. Landsberg wrote in part (I quote from the original article published in the *Brahmavadin* of February 15, 1896) as follows:

> We Americans are a very receptive nation; and this is why our country has become the hot-bed of all kinds of religious and irreligious monstrosities that ever sprang from a human brain. There is no theory so absurd, no doctrine so irrational, no claim so extravagant, no fraud so transparent that it cannot find here numerous believers and—a ready market. . . . Hundreds of societies and sects have been given birth to, to feed the credulity of the people and, in turn, draw support therefrom. The whole atmosphere is here in some places filled with hobgoblins, spooks, and Mahatmas . . .; and new prophets are rising every day in Israel, sent from some great hierophant of the "Brotherhood of the Motherhood of the Golden Candelabra" and similar known and unknowable Gobi and Himalaya dwellers to start some new sect for

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the salvation of the world, and pocket from $25 to $100 initiation fee from fools ready to pay it.

In searching through the 1895 and 1896 New York papers I found most wondrous news items, which amply illustrate Landsberg's thesis. The abnormal and the fantastic were the rage. I remember in particular a line drawing (photo-engraving was not then in general use) of a pop-eyed young girl, sitting bolt upright in bed and staring hypnotically at a doctor. She was demonstrating her remarkable gift for seeing thought-waves, which were pictured rippling like smoke down the arms, spine and legs of the somewhat pompous and startled man. This talent made the girl very nervous, which accounted for her being in bed.

There were many other wonders: enormous and deadly serious meetings of spiritualists, heated arguments as to who was a reincarnation of whom, and little girls with second sight. Almost every day headlines such as the following were splashed across the pages telling of new marvels: "MRS. PIPER AGAIN MANIFESTS HER WONDERFUL POWER AS A MEDIUM. ASTONISHING STORY OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE UNSEEN WORLD VOUCHED FOR BY A WELL KNOWN ACTRESS."

Although occultism had its Western sources, it was the mode of the day to trace mysterious and psychical powers to India, and therefore it was inevitable that at first many dabblers in the occult attended Swamiji's New York lectures and that the leaders of various spiritualistic groups tried in one way or another to associate themselves with him. Of this phenomenon Landsberg writes in the same *Brahmavadin* letter:

> In the beginning, crowds of people flocked to his lectures. But they were not of the kind that a teacher of religion would be pleased to have for his auditors. They consisted partly of curiosity-seekers who were more interested in the personality of the preacher than in what he had to preach, partly of the representatives of the cranky and fraudulent elements mentioned before, who thought they had found in the Swami a proper tool to forward their interests. Most if not all of this latter type of persons tried to induce him to embrace their cause, first by promises of their support, and then by threats of injuring him if he refused to ally himself with them. But

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they were all grievously disappointed. For the first time, they had met with a man who could be neither bought nor frightened:—"trafil kosa na kamienia," "the sickle had hit on a stone," as the Polish proverb says. To all these propositions, his only answer was and is:—"I stand for Truth. Truth will never ally itself with falsehood. Even if all the world should be against me, Truth must prevail in the end!" He denounced fraud and superstition in whatever guise they appeared, and all those untrue and erratic existences, like bats at the approach of daylight, hid themselves in their haunts before this apostle of truth.

The intensity and sureness with which Swamiji worked brooked no interference whatsoever. Even his closest friends were sometimes startled to see the utter independence of his spirit, which defied all the conventional rules of "getting ahead." The fact is that Swamiji had no desire for "success" as the world conceives it. It was his for the asking; yet he scorned it. "Now, my children," he wrote to Alasinga in May of 1895, "I could have made a grand success in the way of organizing here, if I were a worldly hypocrite." And again at a later date, "I sought praise neither from India nor from America, nor do I seek such bubbles. I have a truth to teach, I, the child of God. And He that gave me the truth will send me fellow-workers from the earth's bravest and best." It was never in numbers that Swamiji counted the strength of his following, but in the intensity and sincerity of the individual student. In answer to the surprise of a disciple that his teachings did not attract a larger audience, he said: "I could have thousands more at my lectures if I wanted them. It is the sincere student who will help to make this work a success and not merely large audiences. If I succeed in my life in helping one man to reach freedom, I shall feel that my labors have not been in vain, but quite successful."

Indifferent to the vox populi, Swamiji not only refused to make concessions, on the one hand to "the right kind of people" and on the other hand to the occultists, but would in no way compromise his message for the sake of establishing harmonious relations with the Christian clergy. In this last respect he was often a source of perplexity and worry to many of his friends who, loving him, sought to advise and protect him. This was much like trying to advise the lion to accommodate himself to the ways of the lamb—if not to those

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of sheep. Swamiji walked alone—single-minded, indomitable. It was at this period of his life that even the Hale family began to fear he had changed; for to those brought up in the Christian tradition, to whom meekness and mildness are synonymous with holiness, the actual ways of God and His prophets are, to say the least, astonishing. Swamiji's superhuman power, his unswerving determination to carry out his mission in America, his impatience with all that was antithetical to truth, were apt to be mistaken for a lack of religious humility—particularly by those who were at a distance from him. It was in answer to what was probably a rebuke from Mary Hale that Swamiji wrote on February 1 one of his most fiery letters, which has since become a well-known example of his uncompromising spirit. He said in part:

> I am very glad of your criticisms and am not sorry at all. The other day at Miss Thursby's I had a hot argument with a Presbyterian gentleman, who as usual got very hot, angry and abusive. However, I was severely reprimanded by Mrs. Bull for it, as such things hinder my work. So it seems is your opinion. I am glad you write about it just now because I have been giving a good deal of thought to it. In the first place, I am not at all sorry for these things—perhaps that may disgust you, it may. I know full well how good it is for one's worldly prospects to be *sweet,* but when it comes to a horrible compromise with the truth within, there I stop. I do not believe in *humility,* I believe in *Samadarshitvam*—same state of mind with regard to all. The duty of the common man is to obey the commands of his "God" society—the children of light never do it. This is an eternal law. One accommodates himself to surroundings and social opinion and gets all good things from their giver of all *goods* (?)—society. The other stands alone and drags society up towards him. The accommodating man finds a path of roses—the non-accommodating, one of thorns—but the worshipper of "Vox populi" goes to annihilation in a moment—the children of truth *live for ever. . . .*
>
> The last fight with the Presbyterian priest and the long fight afterwards with Mrs. Bull showed me in clear light what Manu says to the Sannyasin—"Live alone—walk alone." . . . Sister, the way is long, the time is short—evening is

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approaching—I have to go home soon. I have no time to give my manners a finish—I cannot find time enough to deliver my message. You are good, you are so kind, I will do anything for you—but be not angry—I see in you all only children. . . .

You are mistaken, utterly mistaken if you think I have a *work* as Mrs. Bull thinks. I have no *work* under or beyond the sun. I have a message—I will give it after my own fashion —I will neither Hinduize my message nor Christianize it nor make it any ize in the world—I will only Myize it and that is all. *Liberty—Mukti*—is all my religion and everything that tries to crush it I will avoid by fight or flight. Pooh! I try to pacify the priests!!!!!!! . . . Come out if you can of this network of foolishness they call this *world*—I will call you indeed brave and free. If you cannot, cheer those that dare dash this false God—society—unto the earth and trample on its unmitigated hypocrisy; if you even cannot cheer them, pray be silent but do not try to drag them down again into the mire with such false nonsense as *compromise* and becoming *sweet*.

It may be that Mary Hale replied to this blast with a wounded cry, for on February 15 Swamiji wrote to her a conciliatory poem, to which she, in turn, replied in verse. This rhymed correspondence has been given in full in Volume VIII of "The Complete Works," but I believe a verse or two of it will bear repeating, for it shows so well the easy, loving relationship between Swamiji and the Hale sisters. Swamiji's verse was both playful and serious; while he pacifies "Sister Mary," he also restates his position in lines that have become well known to his followers:

Now Sister Mary,
You need not be sorry
For the hard raps I gave you,
You know full well
Though you like me tell
With my whole heart I love you. . . .
The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
The flame stirred up doth blaze,

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The desert air resounds the calls
Of heart-struck lion's rage.
The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast,
When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
Great ones unfold their best. . . .
Nor angel I, nor man nor brute,
Nor body, mind, nor he or she,
The books do stop in wonder mute
To tell my nature; I am He.

Mary Hale's half saucy, half remorseful reply is quoted in part as follows:

One day he sat and mused alone—
Sudden a light around him shone,
The "still small voice" his thoughts inspire
And his words glow like coals of fire.
And coals of fire they proved to be
Heaped on the head of contrite me—
My scolding letter I deplore
And beg forgiveness o'er and o'er.
The lines you sent to your sisters four
Be sure they'll cherish evermore
For you have made them clearly see
The one main truth that "all is He."

This correspondence in verse did not end here, but took a new turn. Mary Hale was a student of Christian Science, and Swamiji, knowing the non-monistic twist she was apt to give to the words "all is He," replied in part:

So Mary Hale,
Allow me tell
You mar my doctrines wronging, baulking.
I never taught
Such queer thought
That all was God—unmeaning talking!
But this I say,
Remember pray,

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That God is *True,* all else is *nothing,*
This world's a dream
Though true it seem,
And only truth is *He* the living!
The real *me* is none but *He,*
And never, never *matter* changing!

It was a subtle point. In reply Mary Hale wrote:

The difference I clearly see,
'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee—
That is a proposition sane
But truly 'tis beyond my vein
To make your Eastern logic plain. . . .

It might be mentioned in passing that Swamiji took delight in gently teasing the Hale sisters about their study and practice of Christian Science. About this same time he wrote a short note from New York to Isabelle McKindley in which he slyly poked fun at the "Scientists'" practice of never confessing to sickness:

54 West 33
New York
The 25th Feb '95

Dear Sister—I am sorry you had an attack of illness. I will give you an absent treatment though your confession takes half the strength out of my mind.

You have rolled out of it is all right. All's well that ends well.

The books have arrived in good condition and many thanks for them

Your ever affectionate bro
Vivekananda

Although Swamiji and Mary Hale left far behind the discussion as to whether he should or should not accommodate himself to the dictates of society and launched instead into a philosophical conversation in verse, Mrs. Hale did not recover too easily from Swamiji's "heart-struck lion's rage," which he evidently conveyed to her in two

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letters. A portion of a letter written to him by Mrs. Hale on February 26 has recently come into our hands and is, I believe, sufficient to show the Christian perplexity at the unrelenting power manifested by, of all people, a monk.

Chicago, February 26, 1895

My dear Swami:

I did not intend answering your first letter. I thought best to let the matter drop and have no more words on the subject but now that the second one has come, beginning with the same story, full of the same spirit, not of love, but of hate—of revilings, of bitterness and of rancor, I cannot but express myself—I confess, dear Brother, to a feeling of terrible disappointment—a year ago such a letter from your pen would have been an utter impossibility. I am glad to have that time to look back upon! Where is the great and glorious soul that came to the Parliament of Religions, so full of love of God, that his face shone with Divine light, whose words were fire, whose very presence created an atmosphere of harmony and purity, thereby drawing all souls to himself? It is our turn to cry "My!!!" Where now is your illustration of the light in the lamp? The force of the Lord reflected in all his creation? . . . You are a funny child—Harriet McK. is in the country. Isabelle is staying with Harriet while Clarence is away—Father Pope continues about the same—he is very feeble and I fear he will never be strong again—Goodbye dear Swamiji—I am not going to apologize for this long letter and I do hope you will shed a ray of light on a few of my perplexities—Go on improving in health—in knowing that "God's in His heaven all's well with the world"—that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs—and the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." You know that is true and why not stick to it? I cannot see that, holding that to be true, our efforts to ameliorate conditions would be paralyzed—I think they would be strengthened.

Although both Mrs. Bull and the Hales felt concern lest Swamiji's fearless dealings with the Christian clergy spell ruin to his work, and although both scolded him for what appeared to them as behavior

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unbecoming to a saint, they did not meet to compare notes until the latter part of March, 1895, when Mrs. Bull visited Chicago. A hitherto unpublished letter of Swamiji written on March 27 to Isabelle McKindley verifies this fact:

54 W. 33.

Dear Sister

Your kind note gave me pleasure inexpressible. I was also able to read it through very easily. I have at last hit upon the orange and have got a coat, but could not as yet get any in summer material. If you get any, kindly inform me. I will have it made here in New York. Your wonderful Dearborn av misfit tailor is too much even for a *monk*.

Sister Locke writes me a long letter and perhaps wondering at my delay in reply. She is apt to be carried away by enthusiasm ; so I am waiting and again I do not know what to answer. Kindly tell her from me that it is impossible for me to fix any place just now. Mrs. Peake though noble grand and very spiritual is as much clever in worldly matter as I, yet I am getting cleverer everyday. Mrs. Peake has been offered by some one whom she knows only hazily in Washington, a place for summer.

Who knows that she will not be played upon? This is a wonderful country for cheating and 99·9 per cent have some *motive* in the background to take advantage of others. If any one just but closes his eyes for a moment he is *gone*! ! Sister Josephine is fiery Mrs. Peake is a simple good woman I have been so well handled by the people here that I look round me for hours before I take a step. Everything will come to right Ask Sister Josephine to have a little patience.

You are every day finding kindergarten better than running an old man's home I am sure. You saw Mrs. Bull and I am sure you were quite surprised to find her so tame and gentle. Do you see Mrs. Adams now and then Mrs. Bull has been greatly benefited by her lessons. I also took a few but no use ; the ever increasing load in front does not allow me to bend forward as Mrs. Adams wants it. If I try to bend forward in walking the centre of gravity comes to the surface of the stomach and so I go cutting front somersaults.

No millionaire coming? Not even a few hundred thou-

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sanders? Sorry very sorry!!! I am trying my best what I can do. My classes are full of women. You of course can not marry a woman. Well have patience I will keep my eyes open and never let go an opportunity. If you do not get one it would not be owing to any laziness at least on my part.

Life goes on the same old ruts. Sometimes I get disgusted with eternal lecturings and talkings, want to be silent for days and days.

Hoping you the best dreams (for that is the only way to be happy).

I remain ever your loving bro
Vivekananda

It would seem that Swamiji had never before manifested such power as he did when starting his classes in New York, and one thinks of him as striding with unimaginable force over every obstacle. The power he exhibited in his answering lecture to the Ramabai Circle in Brooklyn was but one instance of his ability to reach inside the minds of others and tear away veil after veil of blinding ignorance and its counterpart, blinding arrogance. "Sister, you do not know the Sannyasin," he wrote to Mary Hale. " 'He stands on the head of the Vedas!' say the Vedas, because he is free from churches and sects and religions and prophets and books and all of that ilk." No one could long withstand such independence. Those who came to Swamiji to argue, or to scoff and those who came to learn some psychic trick remained to sit at his feet and to drink in the pure water of spirituality which he gave to all without stint.

"Some Theosophists came to my classes in New York," he wrote in August, 1895, to Mr. E. T. Sturdy, "but as soon as human beings *perceive* the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off of themselves. This has been my uniform experience." In his classes Swamiji made his students *perceive* spiritual truths, and thus he launched them irrevocably upon the path to spiritual enlightenment. Even the dyed-in-the-wool materialists were no match for him. The story told in Landsberg's letter of January 13, 1896, to the *Brahmavadin* concerning his guru's complete conquest over this group no doubt refers to the first months of 1895 and will bear repeating here:

The so-called free-thinkers, embracing the atheists, materialists, agnostics, rationalists, and all those who, on prin-

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ciple, are averse to anything that smells of religion, thought this Hindu monk was an easy match for them, and that all his theology would be crushed under the weight of Western civilization, Western philosophy, and Western science. So sure were they of their triumph, that they invited him, in New York, to lecture before their Society, anxious to show to their numerous followers how easily religious claims can be refuted by the powerful arguments of their logic and pure reasoning. I shall never forget that memorable evening when the Swami, accepting the challenge, appeared single-handed, to face the matadors of materialism, all arrayed with their heaviest armour of law, and reason, and logic, and commonsense, of matter, and force, and heredity, and all the stock phrases calculated to awe and terrify the ignorant mass. Imagine their surprise and consternation when they found that, far from being intimidated by these big words he proved himself a master in wielding their own weapons, and as familiar with the arguments of materialism, as with those of the Advaita philosophy. He showed them that their much vaunted Western civilization consisted principally in the development of the art to destroy their fellowmen, that their Western science could not answer the most vital questions of life and being, that their immutable laws, so much talked of, had no outside existence apart from the human mind, that the very idea of matter was a metaphysical conception, and that it was the much despised metaphysics upon which ultimately rested the very basis of their materialism. With an irresistible logic he demonstrated that their knowledge proved itself incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws upon which it depends for its basis; that pure reasoning could not help admitting its own limitations and pointed to something beyond reason; and that rationalism when carried to its last consequences must ultimately land us at a something which is above matter, above force, above sense, above thought and even consciousness, and of which all these are but the manifestations:—"Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor the fire; through Him they all shine."

The powerful effect of this lecture could be seen on the following day, when numbers of the materialistic camp came

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to sit at the feet of the Hindu monk and listen to his sublime utterances on God and religion.

But while Swamiji always opposed and corrected falsehood wherever he found it, never accommodating himself or his message to the dictates of others, and while the word "power" has been often used in describing him, it should never be forgotten that the power he exerted over the minds of others had its source in profound inner peace and was, for this very reason, irresistible and beneficent. Though we have spoken of his battles with Presbyterian ministers, Ramabai Circles and the like, these controversies were but small waves on the vast and fathomless ocean of his mind and, paradoxical as it may seem, the more dynamic his outward expression the deeper was his inner calm. One is reminded in this connection of the answer he gave to his Hindu disciple, Chakravarti, when the latter asked: "Well, sir, did not the bigoted Christians oppose you?" "Yes, they did," Swamiji replied. "When people began to honour me, then the padres came after me. They spread slander about me by publishing it in the newspapers. Many asked me to contradict these things. But I never took the slightest notice of them. It is my firm conviction that no great work is accomplished in this world by low cunning; so without paying any heed to these vile reports, I used to work steadily at my mission. The upshot was that often my slanderers, feeling repentant, would surrender to me. They would themselves contradict the slander in the papers and would offer apologies. . . . The fact is, my son, this whole world is full of mean ways of worldliness. But men of real moral courage and discrimination are never deceived by these. Let the world say what it chooses, I shall tread the path of duty—know this to be the line of action for a hero."

To best understand the spirit in which Swamiji started and conducted his work in New York, one has to remember that a year and a half of mixing with hundreds and thousands of people had created within him, on the one hand, a strong desire to bless and enlighten the common man, and, on the other hand, a resistance to public life and a need to throw off the restricting and defiling circumstances of a traveling lecturer. By the time he arrived at New York he felt a great urge to teach Americans and, simultaneously, as great an urge to live once again the unfettered life of a Hindu monk. To Swamiji the satisfaction of both these urges was possible. Breaking away from the surroundings and demands of his rich and fashionable friends, he took up his own quarters and there lived the austere and spiritually intense life of the

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sannyasin. Not only did he remain in a high state of spiritual consciousness, but he would plunge at the slightest opportunity into the depths of meditation. He would recite texts from Sanskrit scriptures, he would repeat the name of God, or caught up in a mood of divine love he would sing devotional songs from the depths of his heart. And who can say how many hours in the silence of the night he remained lost in the abyss of divine union, or what experiences were his while the world slept? As is known, it was Swamiji's habit to sleep only an hour or two in the twenty-four, and when one thinks of his exalted state one cannot but feel that he lived both day and night on the very edge of the Infinite. "He literally radiated spirituality. . . . An atmosphere of benediction, of peace, of power and of inexpressible luminosity was felt by one and all who came to his classes."

"One sees him in his New York retreat," reads "The Life," "in the morning or the evening quiet, or at dead of night, meditating. Oftentimes he was lost in meditation, his unconsciousness of the external betraying his complete absorption within." Or, surrounded by a group of vivacious talkers, his "eyes would grow fixed, his breath would come slower and slower till there would be a pause and then a gradual return to consciousness of his environment." Swamiji's friends understood his habit of falling into meditation and respected it—indeed, none would dare intrude with chatter upon that deep, majestic silence. "If he was found in a room, in silence, no one disturbed him, though he would sometimes rise and render assistance to an intruder, without breaking the train of thought." Even while holding a class, he would plunge into profound contemplation. "When the Swami emerged from such states," "The Life" relates, "he would feel impatient with himself, for he desired that the Teacher should be uppermost in him, rather than the Yogi. In order to avoid repetitions of such occurrences, he instructed one or two how to bring him back by uttering a word or a Name, should he be carried by the force of meditation into Samadhi."

One can well imagine that to attend Swamiji's classes was no simple matter. To come suddenly from a cluttered, urban life and from noisy, winter-dreary streets into the rarefied atmosphere of his rooms, which literally vibrated with spiritual power, peace and joy, to be day after day in the presence of a radiant prophet and to have one's mind suddenly lifted and expanded to where it might behold a realm never dreamed of before, was an experience that could be overwhelming. But it was Swamiji's greatness as a teacher to guide his students so that their bodies

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and minds became fit vessels to receive the almost terrible gift of his awakening power.

He gave to everyone: lecturing, teaching, talking, even scolding. Nor did he save his bounty for his friends or students alone. The tramp in the street was to him as worthy of his love and blessings as the most qualified spiritual aspirant. One recalls Sister Christine's memories of Swamiji in New York, and though she speaks of a later year than that with which we are concerned, her story can no doubt be applied also to 1895. "Once," she writes, "there was a pitiful little group that clung to him with pathetic tenacity. In the course of a walk he had gathered up first one and then another. This ragged retinue returned with him to the house on 58th [?] Street which was the home of the Vedanta Society. Walking up the flight of steps leading to the front door the one beside him thought, 'Why does he attract such queer abnormal people?' Quick as a flash he turned and answered the unspoken thought, 'You see, they are Shiva's demons.' "

When Swamiji was not holding classes and lectures or giving private instruction or meditating, he spent much of his time in the study of Western life and knowledge. As always, everything pertaining to humanity interested him, and, as always, he read prodigiously, retaining all he read and relating every facet of man's life and thought to spiritual ideals. In the spring of 1895 he was also organizing his work in India by means of innumerable letters. Indeed this period was one of intense activity in this regard, and his work of planning, of finding practical solutions to India's complex problems, and of directing and inspiring his brother monks and disciples, was in itself a stupendous task. But in the midst of furious work, of teaching, giving lectures, studying, carrying on a voluminous correspondence, in the midst of bitter opposition, and of adulation from both those who looked upon him as "a social lion" and those who knew his true worth, he remained always in the blissful repose that asked nothing of and took nothing from the world.

It is only through understanding Swamiji's unbroken, luminous serenity and his immense, all-embracing love that one can understand the quality of his power. He moved the tides of man's thought much as "the innocent moon, that nothing does but shine, moves all the labouring surges of the world." Going his own way, he had altered the course of history. " 'Go thou thy way, Sannyasin!' " he had written to Mary Hale, quoting Bhartrihari. " 'Some will say, who is this mad man? Others, who is this Chandala? Others will know thee to be a

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sage. Be glad at the prattle of worldlings.' But when they attack, know that the elephant passing through the market-place is always beset by curs, but he cares not. He goes straight on *his own way*. So it is always, when a great soul appears there will be numbers to bark after him."

Almost a whole nation had barked after Swamiji, but he had strode on unperturbed, chastising where it was necessary with one or two well-directed blows, awakening and quickening the minds of thousands, and bestowing his blessings upon friend and foe alike. Both America and Swamiji had changed from a year and a half's contact with each other. The eyes of the country had been opened to a new vista of thought, and the living seed of spirituality had been firmly planted in the souls of the people, where it would inevitably grow. Swamiji himself had developed and given form to many of his ideas, he had learned the need of the West for the philosophy of Vedanta and he had seen how that philosophy could be applied to every problem of modern man. He was now ready to nurture the seed he had planted into a sturdy tree whose roots would strike deep and whose branches would give shelter to the world.

II

Swamiji's life from the spring of 1895 forward is well known, and his teachings have been amply recorded. Toward the end of the year his American devotees engaged the services of Mr. J. J. Goodwin, who was able to transcribe his lectures and class talks accurately, and it is to his faithful and tireless service that we owe most of the lectures that have been published in "The Complete Works." Other records of Swamiji's life and teachings dating from 1895 to his death on July 4, 1902, are available in the form of letters, memoirs, notes of lectures and talks, and complete records of conversations. Thus my particular task, which was to tell only of the early and heretofore little-known period of his American visit, is finished.

But though my narrative has come to an end, one vital question remains unanswered. The reader will remember that in the last section of Chapter Eight I attempted to discover the true significance of Swamiji's lecture tour through the Midwest and the East. By studying what he himself said and did, I found that the idea of teaching Vedanta to the West did not evolve in his mind until the latter part of 1894 and that prior to that time the apparent motives that had guided him were

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twofold: (1) to raise funds for the development of his Indian work and incidentally to provide for his own support during his stay in this country, and (2) to give the American people a correct idea of Hinduism, to remove current misconceptions regarding his motherland and to inculcate a spirit of religious tolerance. But while these were motives not unworthy of Swamiji's great patriotism and intellectual genius, they were not, one must concede, commensurate with his spiritual stature. I was forced, therefore, to recognize that his tour had another and more fundamental meaning and concluded that during his travels he was, consciously or unconsciously, fulfilling the function of a divine prophet to America—scattering the seeds of spirituality wherever he went and bestowing his blessing upon innumerable men and women. As he himself later wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda: "I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will fall, there it will fructify—be it today, or in a hundred years."

This prophetic mission was, of course, not peculiar to Swamiji's lecture tour. Throughout his life, wherever he was and whatever he was outwardly doing, he permanently lifted the consciousness of all with whom he came in contact. It was truly said of him: "Vivekananda is nothing if not a breaker of bondage." His very presence was a profound blessing, and we shall miss the full significance of his activities and teachings if we forget that above all he was a prophet, born—if his Master is to be believed—for the good of mankind. We are not concerned here, however, with his functions as a divine prophet, but rather with the development of his message and his world mission.

If the reader has accepted the view that Swamiji did not come to America with a ready-made message, then the question has no doubt arisen in his mind as to how, why and when it evolved. It is this question which I should like now to discuss and to which I shall try to find as clear an answer as possible. One of the best means of doing this is to search for clues through the foregoing narrative, through Swamiji's letters, both published and heretofore unpublished, and through other available records of his thought prior to 1895.

In making this research I am not unaware of certain handicaps. First, although we are now in possession of more material pertaining to 1893 and 1894 than has been included in the biographies and "The Complete Works," many gaps in our knowledge of the period still remain. Second, the available material consists largely of newspaper reports, in which Swamiji's lectures and talks reach us colored by the minds of the reporters. When we compare these reports with the

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accurate and full transcriptions of his later lectures made by the faithful Goodwin, and compare the press interviews with, for example, the vivid account of his conversations in Annisquam written by Mrs. John Henry Wright, we are forced to recognize that much of the originality and subtlety of his ideas and many of the fresh and shining insights that must have flashed through his lectures, illuminating whole fields of knowledge, were lost upon the general run of reporters—and thus lost to us. The newspaper reports, moreover, are for the most part short. While we are often told by the reporters of Swamiji's clarity and strength of thought, of his genius for imparting new ideas, we are seldom given a verbatim account of those ideas. Lectures that took him two hours to deliver were summarized in one or two columns, and ideas which must have poured forth in torrents were reduced to a trickle. (It should also be mentioned that sometimes Swamiji was deliberately misquoted and misrepresented by hostile writers. But in such cases, his friends, as has been seen, often came to his defense and set matters straight. There is little danger therefore of our being misled in this respect. It is also possible that some fictitious and deleterious reports reached India through the machinations of his enemies, but these also need not concern us here.)

However, despite the above deficiencies, the reports included in this book are on the whole dependable and, when checked for accuracy against Swamiji's letters, serve as invaluable source material. We should in fact be grateful to the reporters for doing as much and as well as they did. They have thrown light not only on the development of Swamiji's mission, but on a great deal more. They have, for instance, given us general information about his activities which we cannot come upon elsewhere. They have also highlighted many small details as to what he said and did, which, while perhaps not always of primary importance, are sources of delight to us, for it is through such small, endearing and revealing glimpses of him that he emerges as a living and vital personality. We should be particularly grateful to the reporters for having given so much attention to his personal appearance, his clothes, his manner, his voice and his way of speaking. Such descriptions bring home to us the fact, sometimes hard to grasp, that Swamiji walked this earth and that he talked to and smiled upon people such as you and me. Apart from contributing these details, the newspapers in their editorials, letter columns and even in their headlines give us an idea of the reaction of the public to the "Hindoo Monk." The reported titles of the lectures, moreover, serve as an index to the ideas he was

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interested in propagating during his tour, and the reported contents of these lectures, though at times regrettably skimpy, are nevertheless revealing of the way in which he dealt with those ideas. We gain, for instance, a fair knowledge of his appraisal and defense of Hinduism and Hindu culture in the face of American criticism; we learn how he attacked Christian bigotry; we see his impact upon the nineteenth-century Western mind and also something of its impact upon him.

While a knowledge of these things serves, I admit, only a subsidiary purpose to our main research, it is, in itself, invaluable to students and devotees of Swamiji, and so, in passing, I would like to refer briefly to some of these contributions of the American press.

It is curious that nowhere else does one find so detailed a description of Swamiji's personality as in the American newspapers. Although Romain Rolland gives us a general picture of him in his "Prophets of the New India" and "The Life" has reproduced a paragraph from the *Phrenological Journal* of New York, in which his measurements are given and head bumps interpreted, the Indian biographies and the memoirs written by people who had known him seem with scrupulous care to avoid describing him. Unfortunately this is also true of the biographies of Sri Ramakrishna's other disciples and those of Sri Ramakrishna himself. Were it not for a few available photographs we should be left completely in the dark in regard to the personal appearance of these great souls. Possibly this oversight is due to the Hindu writers' concern with spiritual rather than physical facts. Yet the Hindu is aware that the devotee never tires of hearing detailed descriptions of the object of his devotion. He wants to know about the shape and size of his eyes, the texture of his hair, the exact hue of his complexion, his height, the build of his body, the quality of his voice, his characteristic gestures, his clothes, his likes and dislikes and so on. In fact, this hunger for knowledge regarding the outer characteristics of the manifestations of God and of the knowers of God is more typically Indian than Western. Why the Hindu biographers of Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciples were so unrealistic in these matters seems, therefore, an unanswerable question. Could it be that the long political subjection of the Hindus has deprived them of that robust idealism which the ancient Hindus possessed to such an extraordinary degree and of which a sense of the real at every level of perception is an integral part?

Be that as it may, the American reporters of the 1890's have happily made up for this lack in regard to Swamiji. Although in some instances

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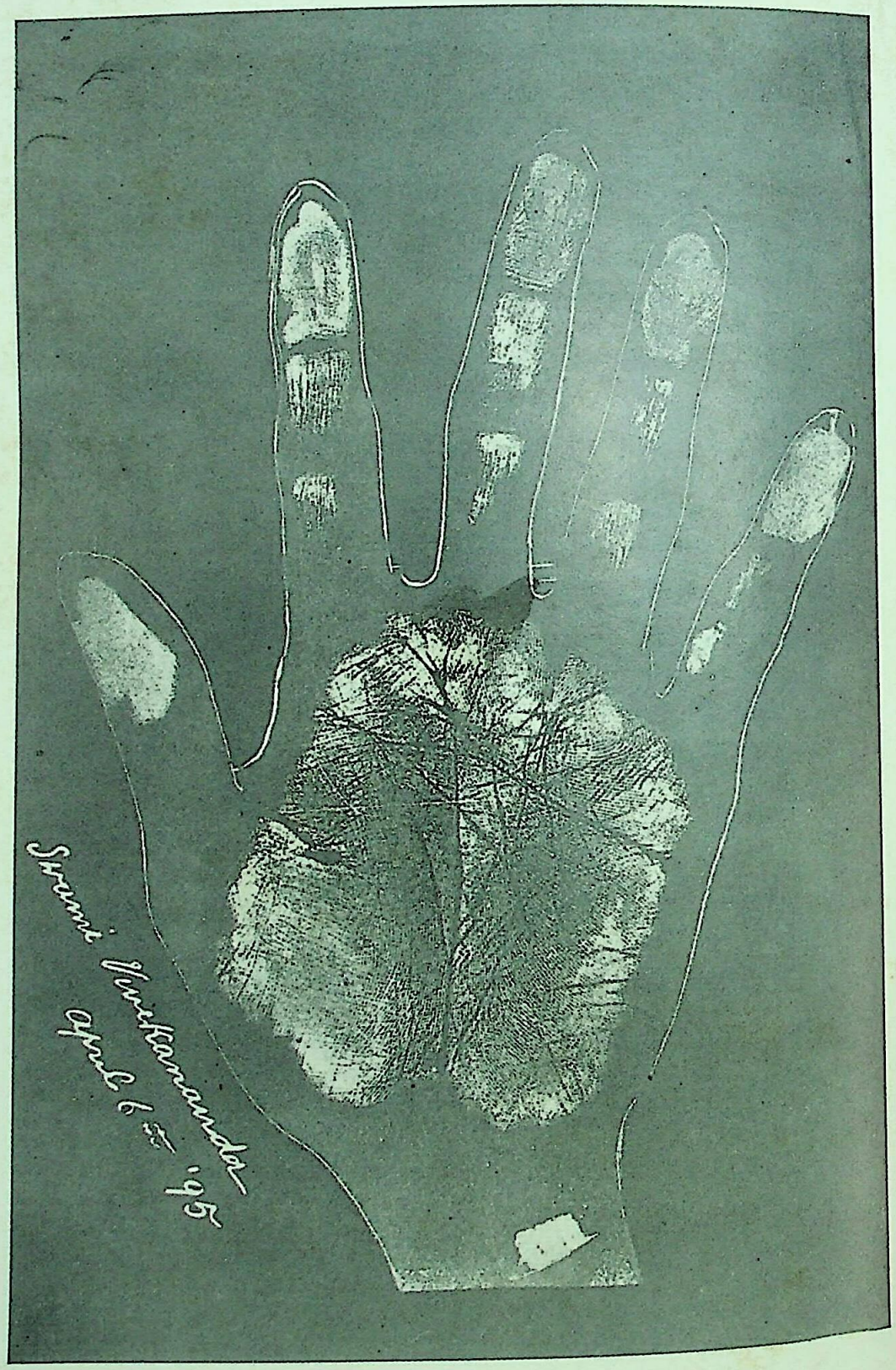

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PALM

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their descriptions are contradictory, on the whole they agree and, combined, give a fairly clear picture of him as he was in the full vigor of his youth.

According to the consensus, he was a little over medium height and strongly built. After the summer of 1894 he is spoken of as heavy, weighing, one reporter guessed, 225 pounds. Most likely, however, this was a wild guess, for the *Phrenological Journal,* whose writers were given to taking accurate measurements, describes him as five feet eight and a half inches tall, weighing 170 pounds. But perhaps accurate measurements were impossible in Swamiji's case, for we learn from a reporter of the New York *Herald,* writing on January 18, 1896, that he had a curious habit of altering his height up and down to an astonishing degree! This may also have been true of his weight! But whatever Swamiji's weight may have been at any given time, he was always described as well-proportioned, and his carriage was always spoken of as majestic, graceful and utterly unself-conscious. On first laying eyes on him, Mrs. Wright wrote of him to her mother: "He came Friday! In a long saffron robe that caused universal amazement. He was a most gorgeous vision. He had a superb carriage of the head, was very handsome in an Oriental way. . . ." She was later to enlarge upon Swamiji's appearance in her article written from notes taken during this first encounter. "There was a commanding dignity and impressiveness in the carriage of his neck and bare head," she wrote, "that caused everyone in sight to stop and look at him; he moved slowly, with the swinging tread of one who had never hastened." And recalling her first sight of him, Mrs. Mary Funke wrote: "I can see him yet as he stepped upon the platform [in Detroit], a regal, majestic figure, vital, forceful, dominant . . ."

It was no doubt Swamiji's "superb carriage" that lent so much glamour to his robe and turban, for while these were in themselves sights to behold, they became on him the raiment of a king. Almost invariably they were commented upon by the reporters, one of whom was so bedazzled as to write, with delicacy, that the "Brahmin priest" was wearing "red nether garments." According to more sober witnesses, Swamiji's trousers were black. His robe, reaching slightly below his knees, was at first a rich orange-yellow, bound with a red sash, which led to his being described as wearing "Baltimore Oriole" dress—the Baltimore oriole being a bird of brilliant orange and black plumage. During the summer of 1894 he had new robes made; the exact gerua (ocher) color being impossible for him to find, these were more red than orange

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and were described variously in Baltimore and Brooklyn as maroon, bright scarlet and bright red. As to his turban, almost everyone was in accord. It was light yellow silk, "the flowing end of which was brought in front over one shoulder"—which end, a Salem reporter wrote, "he used for a handkerchief." This reporter also tells us that Swamiji was wearing "Congress shoes"—a type of shoe then in fashion, ankle-high and equipped with triangular elastic insets at the sides.

When not lecturing, he sometimes dressed "like a well-to-do American"—with the exception, perhaps, of his turban. According to Mrs. Martha Brown Fincke, who met him during his visit to Northampton in the spring of 1894, his dress "was a black Prince Albert coat, dark trousers and yellow turban wound in intricate folds about a finely shaped head." This may have been the suit which Mary Hale "appreciated so much" and which later received a drenching in Annisquam. Although Swamiji insisted that this drenching damaged his suit not at all, he very likely had a new one made, for two months later a Baltimore reporter tells us that "the garb he wore . . . was rather of a clerical cut."

While Swamiji's robe and turban and the majestic way in which he wore them drew the attention of everyone, it was his face that held people spellbound. According to all reports, he was extraordinarily handsome, indeed strikingly so—"as handsome as a god of classic sculpture," Mrs. Constance Towne wrote in her reminiscences. His complexion was described variously as "quite dark," "bronze," "dusky," "rather swarthy," "deep olive," and "resembling that of an Indian," by which last was probably meant an American Indian, whose skin is generally copper in tone. All in all it appears that Swamiji was, for a Hindu, more fair than dark and perhaps when a flush mantled his face, as it did during a lecture in Brooklyn, his complexion became red-gold and luminous.

His features were regular and well-rounded. His forehead was called "intellectual," and his face, "fine, intelligent and mobile," "its lineaments expressive at once of both intellectuality and sentiment." His hair was thick, wavy and "black as midnight," and sometimes, when not wearing a turban, he let it fall over his forehead, so that it reached "nearly to his eyebrows." His teeth, which rarely show in his known photographs, were "straight, even and pearly white." But the most wonderful and arresting features of Swamiji's face were his incomparable eyes. They were large, jet-black (or, as Miss Gibbons, remembers, "midnight blue"), "of great brilliancy," "bright," "sparkling," "full of

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light," "bright with the enthusiasm of a prophet" and "suggestive of deep spirituality"; indeed, although the reporters do not say so, these were eyes that had looked upon God and held within their depths the light of Infinity.

Swamiji's voice was often compared to a musical instrument. In her story of his conversations at Annisquam, Mrs. Wright tells of how in his serious and intense utterances his "beautiful voice" deepened "till it sounded like a bell." "He had a beautiful voice like a violoncello," Miss Josephine MacLeod told Romain Rolland, "grave without violent contrasts but with deep vibrations that filled both hall and hearts. Once his audience was held he could make it sink to an intense *piano* piercing his hearers to the soul. Emma Calvé, who knew him, described it as 'an admirable baritone, having the vibrations of a Chinese gong.'" And Mrs. Mary Funke wrote of his voice as being "all music—now like the plaintive minor strain of an Eolian harp, again, deep, vibrant, resonant." The newspaper reports amply confirm this, consistently describing Swamiji's voice as "music, had you not understood a word," as "deep and musical," "rich and sonorous," "prepossessing one at once in his favor."

As for his speech, his fluent, eloquent and precise use of the English language was "beyond praise," and was sometimes a source of as much amazement as was the subtlety and brilliance of the thought it carried. "This heathen," wrote a Detroit reporter, "speaks the English language with more elegance than is usually heard from our platforms and pulpits, and he seasons his descriptions with a refinement of wit that is almost unequalled among all the speakers whose words are familiar to our ears in public addresses." "His choice of words," wrote another reporter, "are [sic] the gems of the English language." "He speaks without notes," commented Lucy Monroe of the *Critic*, "presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art, the most convincing sincerity, and rising at times to a rich, inspiring eloquence." Swamiji's accent, we are told, was only slight, "similar to that of a cultured member of the Latin race familiar with the English language." (Miss Conger refers to it as "the lilt of a slight well-bred Irish brogue.") Sometimes he stressed the wrong syllable of an English word, and sometimes, if he has been quoted correctly, he gave a quaint twist to an English phrase, all of which must have lent further enchantment to the wit and poetry that wove like a sunlit brook through his lectures, giving "light and life to every subject he touched." "The workings of his mind, so subtle and so brilliant, so well stored and so well trained,

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sometimes dazzled his hearers," wrote one reporter ; and another: "He speaks English not only distinctly, but fluently, and his ideas as new as sparkling, drop from his tongue in a perfectly bewildering overflow of ornamental language. . . . He is an artist in thought, an idealist in belief and a dramatist on the platform."

But although Swamiji's lectures were suffused with poetic imagery and drama, they were at the same time logically precise. "The speaker differs in one respect in particular from some American orators," commented a Memphis reporter. "He advances his ideas with as much deliberation as a professor of mathematics demonstrates an example in algebra to his students. . . . He advances no ideas, nor makes assertions that he does not follow up to a logical conclusion." Swamiji's critics were sometimes prone to emphasize the fact (presumably damning) that his audiences consisted primarily of women. This, however, was not the case. His vast learning and the impeccable logic with which he presented his thesis attracted to him intelligent and educated people of both sexes. As the Northampton *Daily Herald* commented, "To see and hear Swami Vive Kananda is an opportunity which no intelligent fair-minded American ought to miss if one cares to see a shining light of the very finest product of the mental, moral and spiritual culture of a race which reckons its age by thousands where we count ours by hundreds and is richly worth the study of every mind." "All classes flocked to hear him," the same paper wrote, "and professional men in particular were deeply interested in his logic and soundness of thought." One also remembers that Mrs. Bagley of Detroit included among those whom she invited to hear him speak "lawyers, judges, ministers, army officers, physicians and business-men with their wives and daughters," and that "all listened with intense interest to the end." In Brooklyn "men of all professions and callings—doctors and lawyers and judges and teachers—together with many ladies, had come from all parts of the city to listen to his strangely beautiful and eloquent defense of the 'Religions of India' . . . they had heard of his culture and his learning, of his wit and his eloquence, of his purity and sincerity and holiness, and hence they expected great things. And they were not disappointed."

Swamiji's learning was prodigious "beyond comparison with most of our scholars" ; and this, together with his irresistible charm and "magnetic attractiveness," made him not only an incomparable lecturer but a superb conversationalist. "As a companion," wrote a Memphis reporter, fortunate enough to know whereof he spoke, "he is a most charming man, and as a conversationalist he is, perhaps, not surpassed

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in the drawingrooms of any city in the Western World." The combination of humility and erudition, of simplicity and wisdom, endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. "He is remarkably well versed upon religious, scientific and metaphysical literature," another Memphis reporter wrote, "not only of his own country but of the world as well, and is capable, by reason of his versatility, of maintaining himself in any position in which circumstances may cast his lot. There is throughout his bearing and conversation a certain child-like simplicity of manner that enlists one's sympathy, and convinces one of the sincerity of the man's utterances before he begins to speak." "Swami Vive Kananda has been entertained in a public and private way by the citizens and has created a profound sensation in all cultured circles," wrote the *Memphis Commercial.* "His learning embraces such a wide range of subjects and his knowledge is so thorough that even specialists in the various sciences, theology, art and literature, learn from his utterances and absorb from his presence." In Baltimore he was written of as "a charming conversationalist . . . familiar with the works of all the great writers in a dozen different tongues, and he quotes long selections from Spencer, Darwin, Mill or others of the great philosophers with a fluency that is surprising." And withal, Swamiji was "as good-natured and jolly as it is possible for a man to be."

Yet there was about him the majesty of his spiritual stature. Though he was "jolly" and sometimes "turned the laugh on the [impertinent] inquirer," one senses throughout the reports of his lectures and conversations his immense, though "modest," dignity and "magnetic power." "There was a sense of tranquility and power about him," Malvina Hoffman wrote, "that made an imperishable impression upon me. He seemed to personify the mystery and religious 'aloofness' of all true teachers of Brahma, and combined with this a kindly and gentle attitude of simplicity towards his fellow men." And Mrs. Martha Browne Fincke, who met him at Smith College when she was a young girl, wrote of "the face with its inscrutable expression, the eyes so full of flashing light, and the whole emanation of power [which were] beyond description."

The word "dynamic," so often used in connection with Swamiji, is apt to give rise to a false picture. He was not "dynamic" in the ordinary sense of the word; that is, he was not explosive. His intense power and magnetism were felt rather than seen; and far from being violent he was "gentle in manner, deliberate in movement, and

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extremely courteous in every word, movement and gesture." In spite of the power and vitality of his words, his manner of speaking was quiet and precise. Unlike the majority of contemporary lecturers, who stood glued to one spot from which they held forth, he had a habit of walking about the stage or platform, "talking sometimes in a way that suggests a soliloquy." He never orated, nor did he ever substitute loudness of voice for true force of expression. He convinced his hearers "by quietness of speech rather than by rapid action," "his low, earnest delivery making his words singularly impressive." As a Northampton reporter ably expressed it, "the slow, soft, quiet, unimpassioned musical voice, embodying its thought with all the power and fire of the most vehement physical utterance, went straight to the mark." One striking instance of Swamiji's ability to electrify a large audience without raising his voice is his first lecture in Brooklyn. This lecture, which was such a tremendous success and which "held spellbound . . . every-one of those many hundreds" who attended, was delivered, wrote a reporter, "in a sort of monotone."

Swamiji's criticisms of Western life, of which there were more and more as time went on, were never exaggerated, and despite their pointedness were always "courteously, kindly, gracefully expressed." "If he stabs a belief or custom which is distasteful to him he always does it with a needle and not with a spike-staff," a Detroit reporter wrote, and, expressing the same idea, Lucy Monroe wrote of his early lectures, "Though the little sarcasms thrown into his discourses are as keen as a rapier, they are so delicate as to be lost on many of his hearers. Nevertheless his courtesy is unfailing, for these thrusts are never pointed so directly at our customs as to be rude." Later on, Swamiji's thrusts became, perhaps, more direct, causing Mrs. Wright to refer to them in May of 1894 as "witty, bitter, sharp flings that were all deserved, all neatly done, all to the point. . . ."

Indeed, as time went on Swamiji's manner changed; although he remained always reserved, his approach to the public became more positive. At first he was "modest in demeanor, . . . inclined to be diffident until aroused." In his letters to Professor Wright, written shortly after the Parliament of Religions, he appears modest and humble, depending for his own strength on God, and apparently feeling his way in his new field of work, sensing its overwhelming difficulties and grateful for any kindness and help. Swamiji never became indifferent to kindness, but as he began to understand the scope of his work and the extent of his responsibility, he began to develop an

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unshakeable faith in his ability to "convulse the world." He knew with ever-increasing certainty that behind his work and his words was a power greater than any on earth. "I *see* a greater Power than man, or God, or devil at my back," he wrote in September of 1895 to Alasinga ; and however gentle he may have been, he carried about him an aura of that power, which some found difficult to bear. (It was only, however, through 1893 and 1894 that he exerted this power against the critics of his people. From the spring of 1895 onward he felt that his work of breaking the back of missionary fanaticism was over. Henceforth he became comparatively nonresistant to criticism.)

But while Swamiji was assertive, he was "never aggressive," and only those who stood to lose by the keenness and truth of his observations took offense. He himself was totally innocent of personal rancor. "He does not antagonize," Mrs. Bagley wrote, "but lifts people up to a higher level—they see something beyond man-made creeds and denominational names, and they feel one with him in their religious beliefs." His simplicity was often remarked upon by those whom he engaged in conversation. "Those who came to know him best," wrote the *Iowa State Register,* "found him the most gentle and lovable of men, so honest, frank, and unpretending, always grateful for the many kindnesses that were shown him." His brilliance, his ready wit, his vast and astonishing fund of knowledge on every subject and his insight into every person and every situation were so devoid of self-consciousness and egotism that they enhanced rather than concealed his childlike nature. The fact is that when Swamiji came to America he was already established in the state of a Paramahamsa (a transcendental knower of God), and had become in his total purity similar to a child, uncontaminated and blissful. Now and then one catches hints of what his inner state must have been during his wandering days in India. There is, for instance, his confidence to Mary Hale written in a letter from Thousand Island Park: "Every day I feel I have no duty to do ; I am always in eternal rest and peace. It is He that works. We are only the instruments. Blessed be His name! The threefold bondage of lust and gold and fame is as it were fallen from me for the time being, and once more even here I feel what sometimes I felt in India, 'From me all difference has fallen, all right and wrong, all delusion and ignorance has vanished, I am walking in the path beyond the qualities. What law I obey, what disobey?' " The last two sentences are Swamiji's free translation of the first verse of "Shukashtakam" ("Eight Verses of

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Shuka") and are a description of the state beyond all gunas—the transcendental state, which once attained, is never actually lost.

Even while Swamiji was in the midst of arduous work we again and again find comments upon his holiness and "child-like simplicity of manner." One is reminded, for instance, of what Mrs. Wright wrote at the beginning of his American visit: "We saw him leave us . . . with the fear that clutches the heart when a beloved, gifted, passionate child fares forth, unconscious, in an untried world." But having fared forth, Swamiji was changed by neither fame nor hardship. After he had traveled through the Midwest and the East, maligned by ill-wishers and lionized by the elite of intellectual and social circles, Mrs. Bagley wrote of him: "He is a strong, noble human being, one who walks with God. He is as simple and trustful as a child," and the Brooklyn papers spoke of "his purity, sincerity and holiness." This quality of unruffled and inviolable innocence, this uncomplicated child-likeness, which, despite, or perhaps because of, his "personal reserve when speaking to ladies," always brought out the maternal instinct in the women who knew him, such as Mrs. Lyon and Mrs. Hale in Chicago, Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Bagley, Mrs. Bull and, no doubt, Mrs. Guernsey and many others, is characteristic, as the Hindu reader will know, of the Paramahamsa—he who is eternally united with God.

As has been said, the titles of Swamiji's reported lectures give a good indication of the subjects he dealt with during his tour and of the general ideas he was trying to implant in the American mind. In the course of the foregoing narrative I have presented reports and notices of sixty-three lectures, seven informal talks and six interviews which were given during the period from August 27, 1893, to January 28, 1895, on which date he opened his classes in New York. In addition there are reports of three lectures delivered in Brooklyn on February 3, February 25 and April 8 of 1895, which should, I believe, be considered as belonging to the period of his lecture tour, for though they overlap the start of his New York classes, they are more concerned with an explanation of Indian customs than with Vedanta. We have in all, therefore, sixty-six reports of lectures which can be classified as "pre-Vedanta."

On the basis of their titles these lectures can be divided into three categories: those which dealt with India, those which pertained to the harmony of religions, and those devoted to a discussion of Buddha and Buddhism. Of the lectures which fall within the first group, two,

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delivered in Saratoga Springs, were entitled "The Mohammedan Rule in India" and "The Use of Silver in India"; eleven were concerned with giving a general picture and interpretation of the Hindu way of life, and six with explaining the life of Hindu women; two dealt directly with the position of the Christian missionary in India, and twenty-three were devoted to an explanation of the religions of India, including five on the subject of reincarnation. In the second group of lectures, which pertained to the harmony of religions, nine were directly concerned with that subject and eight with the general meaning of religion. In the third group were five lectures on Buddha and Buddhism.

While it is true that Swamiji's lectures defy strict classification by titles, for his mind was not compartmented but was an organic whole in which every thought was intimately integrated with every other thought, it is nevertheless clear from the above analysis that his early lectures in America were primarily concerned with explaining India, with inculcating religious tolerance and, through emphasis on Buddha, with teaching compassion.

It is interesting to notice in connection with Swamiji's lectures on India that those which were given prior to the Parliament of Religions differed in tone and content from those which came after. Reading the reports of the lectures given in Salem in August of 1893, one notices a certain innocence in his approach—a belief that most people had the welfare of their fellow men at heart, that American wealth presupposed American generosity, and that a simple explanation of India's real needs would be sufficient to draw a response from the large-hearted American public. Although Swamiji was, of course, not unaware of Christian bigotry, having encountered it in India, he was no doubt surprised by the bitter antagonism that greeted his explanation that it was the Hindu body rather than the Hindu soul which was in need of saving.

Shortly thereafter the tone of his plea changed. At the Parliament of Religions he rebuked the Christians for their hypocrisy. "You Christians," he asked, "who are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the soul of the heathen—why do you not try to save their bodies from starvation? In India, during the terrible famines, thousands died from hunger, yet you Christians did nothing. . . . I came here to seek aid for my impoverished people, and I fully realized how difficult it was to get help for heathens from Christians in a

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Christian land." Indeed it had not taken long for Swamiji's realization of the difficulty to become complete.

After the Parliament he abandoned the plan of publicly interesting Americans "in the starting of new industries among the Hindoos," and decided, rather, to earn the money himself with which to start an educational project for the benefit of his people. Although it is true that he continued to explain his Indian work to sympathetic friends, speaking, for instance, at a Detroit dinner party of his dream of founding an industrial college for monks, his approach to the general public became, so to speak, more educational. Aware that India's defects would be attributed to her lack of Christianity and would elicit not sympathy but only further criticism, he no longer spoke of the poverty, ignorance and suffering of the Indian masses. He was also aware that the mores of any people, when viewed against the background of a foreign *Weltansicht,* are open to fantastic misinterpretation. It became his primary purpose, therefore, to explain the Hindu's basic outlook on life—his religion and moral idealism—and to give, against this background, a true picture of Hindu culture. In addition, he found it imperative to disabuse the American mind of the rank falsehoods that had been dinned into it, refuting wherever he went the distorted and often totally fictitious tales of such things as widow-burning, suicide under the car of Jagannath, throwing infants to the crocodiles, persecution of widows and so on.

Swamiji refused to be one of those Hindus, who, having identified themselves with a conquering nation, held the misery of their own people up to ridicule and contempt. "My mission in life," he wrote later, "is not to be a paid reviler," and with what Sister Nivedita was to call his "splendid scorn of apology for anything Indian," he always spoke with pride of his people and his country. Indeed Swamiji was the first to present India in her true light to the West. As he himself wrote to Alasinga: "I am the one man who dared to defend his country and I have given them such ideas as they never expected from a Hindu." His brilliant and convincing descriptions and interpretations of India's customs and religion came as a revelation to open-minded Americans, who, having seen the true India through his eyes, could never again accept the calumnious tales of the missionaries and other detractors. Even the die-hard bigots were forced to modify their views, so thoroughly discredited had they become. Swamiji's very presence was enough to militate against them. "His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea

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of Hindoo civilization," Lucy Monroe of the *Critic* wrote shortly after the Parliament of Religions, and as time went on this new idea became an established conviction.

It can, I believe, be rightly said that in a little more than one year Swamiji permanently altered the strong current of antagonistic thought that for decades had been directed against his motherland. This he did without using methods of propaganda; rather, with a few descriptions of and insights into the life of India he revealed the character and meaning of the whole of Hindu culture. There was, for instance, his comparison made at Radcliffe College, recorded by Mrs. Wright: "'When *we* are fanatical,' he said, 'we torture ourselves, we throw ourselves under huge cars, we cut our throats, we lie on spiked beds; but when *you* are fanatical you cut other people's throats, you torture *them* by fire and put *them* on spiked beds! You take very good care of your own skins!'" Again, there were his moving depictions of the pure and noble life of Hindu women: "In the West woman is the wife; in the East she is the mother. The Hindoos worship the idea of mother, and even the monks are required to touch the earth with their foreheads before their mothers." Or he spoke of the Hindu's total unselfishness and extreme hospitality. "As long as a Hindu has anything in the house," he told his audience in Detroit, "a guest must never want. When he is satisfied, then the children, then father and mother partake. They are the poorest nation in the world, yet except in times of famine no one dies of hunger." He explained the merits of the caste system. "It is true that there is caste in India," he once said. "There a murderer can never reach the top. Here, if he gets a million dollars he is as good as any one. In India, if a man is a criminal once, he is degraded forever." And again, "In caste the poorest is as good as the richest, and that is one of the most beautiful things about it. . . . The man of caste has time to think of his soul, and that is what we want in the society of India." Nor were Swamiji's listeners likely to forget the description of a Himalayan community of pure Hindus, "unknown to Mahometan and Christian alike," which he gave during one of his afternoon talks in Detroit and which is to be found nowhere else in his lectures or writings. "Pure in thought, deed and action," reads the report, "so honest that a bag of gold left in a public place would be found unharmed twenty years after; so beautiful that, to use Kananda's own phrase, 'to see a girl in the fields is to pause and marvel that God could make anything so exquisite.' Their features are regular,

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their eyes and hair dark, and their skin the color which would be produced by the drops which fell from a pricked finger into a glass of milk. These are the Hindus in their pure type, untainted and untrammeled."

To those who considered the Hindus' culture only a step more advanced than that of the savage, Swamiji's lecture, "India's Gift to the World," which he delivered in Brooklyn, must have come as a shock. Indeed it must have come as a shock even to the more liberal-minded, for it constituted what was probably the first public exposition of India's many and invaluable contributions to Western civilization. After hearing this lecture, even those who ranked material gifts higher than spiritual had to bow their heads before the land whose civilization was father to their own.

Through disclosures such as these Swamiji opened, as it were, a door into a new world. Americans had been told, and had believed, that behind that door lay ghosts and spirits, devils, devil-worshipers and a race of monsters who all but devoured their own children. Suddenly there was disclosed a land of hoary culture, of lofty idealism, of purity and self-sacrifice, where persecution was nonexistent and where the ethical standard was the highest among nations, based on the belief that "all non-self is good and all self is bad." From any lecturer this would have come as a surprise, but from Swamiji, who was the very personification of India's highest ideals, who was the living proof of his own words—"a splendid type," as a Brooklyn reporter wrote, "of the famous sages of the Himalayas"—it came as a never-to-be-forgotten revelation which destroyed the old beliefs and permanently raised India in the estimation of the West.

In presenting his country to America, Swamiji never attempted to hide the facts. He never hesitated to tell his audience her defects when this was called for, but he never imagined and never gave the impression that these defects were representative. His purpose was to make Americans feel the true pulse beat of India, and thus in his general descriptions he always portrayed her healthy and normal state. "The product of the slums of any nation cannot be the criterion of our judgment of that nation," he said in his lecture in Brooklyn on "Ideals of Womanhood." "One may collect the rotten worm-eaten apples under every apple tree in the world, and write a book about each of them and still know nothing of the beauties and possibilities of the apple tree. Only in the highest and best can we judge a nation—the

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fallen are a race by themselves. Thus it is not only proper, but just and right, to judge a custom by its best, by its ideal."

The Christian missionaries and some Indian reformers did not accept this view, nor did they understand it. To them the rotten, worm-eaten apples were representative of the whole tree. Both concentrating on deviations from the norm, the reformers advocated radical changes that dug at the very foundation of Hindu culture, and the missionaries condemned Hinduism with a blind fanatical zeal, insisting that it be uprooted and replaced by Christianity. It was not alone this wholesale condemnation of Hinduism to which Swamiji objected, but the persistent attempt on the part of so-called reformers, both foreign and Indian, to force Hindu life into an alien mold.

In an earlier chapter I have tried to present Swamiji's position in relation to the activities of Christian missionaries in India and I need not repeat myself here, but this is as good a place as any to clarify a certain point left undiscussed. The reader may have noticed that an apparent contradiction exists between Swamiji's main thesis and his invitation to "hundreds and thousands of missionaries of Christ." "We want missionaries of Christ," he declared in Detroit. "Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let him be preached in every village and corner of India." Although during the course of this same lecture, he said: "As far as converting India to Christianity is concerned, there is no hope. If it were possible it ought not to be done," his invitation was interpreted to mean that he was not averse to Christian conversion but only to the poor caliber of the contemporary missionary.

The fact is that Swamiji made a distinction between Christian missionaries and "missionaries of Christ." A clear indication of this is to be found in a report of a Memphis lecture, in which he was quoted as having said that "when the people of the West wanted God [as a man under water wants air], then they would be welcome in India, because missionaries would then come to them with God, not with the idea that India knows not God, but with love in their hearts and not dogma." Thus when he said, "Let him [Christ] be preached in every village and corner of India," he meant not the Christ of dogma—the one and only Savior, but rather, a perfect embodiment of spiritual and moral virtues, a knowledge of whose life would benefit any culture.

In inviting "hundreds and thousands" of missionaries of Christ

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to India, Swamiji, of course, had in mind men and women whose sole purpose would be to implant the seeds of goodness and spirituality in the hearts of the people, to serve the poor, the downtrodden and the miserable, and who would give more importance to the spirit of religion than to its outward forms, caring little whether the Hindus worshiped Christ or Shiva, Sri Krishna or Buddha. "A true lover of God," he said in Detroit, "would be so wrapt up in his love that he would have no time to stop and tell members of another sect that they were following the wrong road . . . and strive to bring him to his way of thinking."

If such true lovers of God were to crowd into every corner of India, Swamiji knew that Hinduism would be safe from attack—would, indeed, be enriched and benefited. His invitation, therefore, did not by any means indicate that his country was an open field for conversion; indeed, though India welcomed all who came to her with respect and sympathy, her doors were closed to those who came to interfere and to destroy. During one of his informal talks in Detroit, he explained this attitude of the Hindu toward the foreigner. The report reads: "When the studious Greeks visited Hindustan to learn of the Hindu, all doors were open to them, but when the Mohammedan with his sword and the Englishman with his bullets came, their doors were closed. Such guests were not welcome. As Kananda deliciously words it: 'When the tiger comes we close our doors until he has passed by.' "

There is, of course, much more to be learned from the reports of Swamiji's lectures and talks on India, and I am tempted to go on speaking of them. For while it is true that his lectures given in India, his recorded conversations, his letters to his brother monks and disciples and his Bengali writings, such as "Modern India"—all of which are included in "The Complete Works"—are replete with passages in which he states his views of his country's past, present and future, I do not believe that there is anything in "The Complete Works" to take the place of his presentation of India in his lectures of 1893, '94 and '95. I must, nevertheless, resist the temptation to say more on this subject and will devote myself to my main thesis, which is to discover the evolution of his message and mission. For this we must first turn to the two groups of lectures which I have classified under the headings of harmony of religions and Buddha and Buddhism, for it is in these that we find him beginning to move toward a definite formulation of his ultimate message to the world.

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III

It was inevitable that from the start Swamiji would lecture in the West on religious harmony, for he was a Hindu, born with an instinctive reverence for all faiths and all sages and prophets. Moreover, and more importantly, the great doctrine of the harmony of religions had been an essential part of his Master's message and had been vividly demonstrated in his life. It was not surprising, therefore, that at Annisquam Swamiji began his first public lecture in America with the statement—as remembered by one of the audience—"The Hindus are taught to have a great respect for other people's religions." But while it was natural that he would at first put forward the doctrine of the harmony of religions in its general form, it was inevitable that he would not remain satisfied with it.

This doctrine has been generally understood to mean that since each religion leads to the same goal—God, every man, while faithfully following the particular religion in which he was born or in which he feels most at home, should at the same time maintain a respectful attitude toward other religions, neither criticizing their beliefs nor obstructing their practices. Swamiji explained this teaching in his first address at the Parliament, when he spoke of his country's acceptance of all religions as true and quoted from the Gita: "All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me." But while such a teaching might at first glance seem to make it possible for various religions to live in peace with one another, it left them more or less separate. It was in practice a teaching of live and let live—a teaching that could not give rise to a stable harmony among religions unless an underlying unity was recognized by them. It was this unity, therefore, which Swamiji later stressed in his "Paper on Hinduism" when he spoke of truth as being the "same light coming through glasses of different colours," and when he described the future universal religion as one "which will have no location in place or time, which will be infinite, like the God it will preach, . . . which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute to the highest man . . . and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be centered in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature."

Although Swamiji did not at this time indicate how such a religion could come into existence, in his final address at the Parliament we

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find him suggesting a means by which at least a partial unity could be established among religions. Going further than in his first talk, he declared that while the Christian was not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian, "each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth." He was here advocating more than respect for other religions; he was urging a receptive attitude toward all the great spiritual thoughts of the world and a breaking down of the walls that surrounded each faith, isolating it from the others. The absurdity of religious narrowness was, of course, patent to him from the start, and, knowing that a parable could sometimes bring home a truth more quickly than a statement, he told at the Parliament and in many places thereafter the story of the pompous frog who considered his own small well to be the entire universe and who could never be convinced of the contrary.

As Swamiji started on his lecture tour we find him laying greater and greater stress on the *unity* of religions and suggesting various means by which it could be realized. However, while his lectures show a definite development in thought, he did not completely reject his earlier ideas; rather, he retained and often repeated for the sake of those whom it would benefit the teaching that all religions lead to the same goal and that they should all, therefore, be accepted as true and good. "The Hindus," he is reported as having said in Memphis, "hold that there is good in all religions, that all religions are embodiments of man's inspiration for holiness, and being such, all should be respected." Although Swamiji felt that mutual respect among religions could not in itself lead to unity, he knew that such respect was nonetheless a prerequisite, for once bigotry had taken root in a man's heart there could be no hope. In the same city he related the saying of an Indian monk: "I would believe you if you were to say that I could pluck a tooth from the mouth of the crocodile without being bitten, but I cannot believe you when you say a bigot can be changed." Was this perhaps told in answer to the Christian minister in Memphis who, as Swamiji later wrote in his reply to the Madras Address, preached that "in every village of India, there is a pond full of the bones of little babies"?

Confronted in America by legions of such bigots, Swamiji could not but stress the fundamentals of tolerance. Again and again he emphasized the fact that all religions are good, that variations are essential. "Why take a single instrument from the great orchestra of

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the earth?" he asked in Detroit. "Let the grand symphony go on. . . . Each creed has something to add to the wonderful structure." Illustrating this point further, he often told the story of the five blind men, each of whom investigated a different part of an elephant and each of whom vigorously defended his own conception of what manner of creature the elephant was. Each was, of course, wrong, but taken all together their pronouncements fairly approximated the truth. "One religion is best adapted to a certain people because of habits of life, association, hereditary traits and climatic influences," he said in Detroit. "Another religion is suited to another people for similar reasons. . . . Let the great stream flow on, and he is a fool who would try to change its course, when nature will work out the solution." Or again, "Men are different. If they were not, the mentality of the world would be degraded. If there were not different religions, no religion would survive." Thus Swamiji retained all that would be of value to various kinds of listeners; but while teaching the fundamentals of tolerance he at the same time continued his effort to define the principles that would embrace all religions and constitute their unity.

An excerpt from a report of a lecture given on November 27, 1893, in Des Moines, Iowa, reads: "He [Swamiji] holds that one must embrace all the religions to become the perfect Christian. What is not found in one religion is supplied by another. They are all right and necessary for the true Christian. When you send a missionary to our country he becomes [or should become] a Hindoo Christian and I a Christian Hindoo." Here Swamiji was trying to show how one might in actual practice not merely assimilate the spirit of other religions but *identify* oneself with them, while remaining true to the faith of one's own choice. A Christian should be able, for instance, to worship God without hesitation or fear in a temple or a mosque when in India. Religious labels were to him the handmaidens of narrowness, and narrowness the cause of dissension. "My Master used to say," he wrote to Mrs. Bull in 1895, "that these names as Hindu, Christian, etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man." Very likely, however, he felt the device of adding the names of other religions to one's own would not in itself suffice to bring about the unity which he so ardently desired, for we do not find him mentioning it in any subsequent lecture.

In this same Des Moines lecture Swamiji presented a more advanced idea. Expansion of religious life, he pointed out, could be achieved by seeking the common denominator of every form of

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worship; for underlying all creeds, sects or religions there are permanent and basic principles, which he called by the simple name of *religion*. "There are in our country," he said, "two words which have altogether different meanings than they do in this country. They are 'religion' and 'sect.' We hold that religion embraces all religions. . . . Then there is that word 'sect.' Here it embraces those sweet people who wrap themselves up in their mantle of charity and say, 'We are right; you are wrong.'" Swamiji was now asking Christians to stop identifying themselves with a sect or creed and to embrace the universal, timeless principles of one all-encompassing religion.

As time went on, he began to stress more and more the difference between religion and creed and sought to formulate the unifying principles through which one could see all creeds as parts of one great whole. Creed, he contended, was not wrong when understood as subservient to religion, but when taken to be religion itself it was deadly. "Religion," he said during the course of an interview in Detroit, "is the acceptance of all existing creeds, seeing in them the same striving toward the same destination. Creed is something antagonistic and combative. There are different creeds because there are different people, and the creed is adapted to the commonwealth where it furnishes what the people want. . . . Religion recognizes and is glad of the existence of all these forms, because of the beautiful underlying principle. . . . All the creeds which are accepted by all people are but the endeavors of humanity to realize that infinity of Self."

According to Swamiji, Christianity, "because of its antagonistic features," was more a creed than a religion. Hinduism, on the other hand, was a religion, for "one of the great factors in the Hindoo religion is its tolerance of other religions and beliefs." It was not, of course, merely tolerance that constituted religion, but, as he said, an acceptance of the underlying principles which unify all creeds. True and lasting tolerance was a natural outcome of this acceptance. "I ask the preachers to give up first the idea of nationality; and second, the ideas of sects," he said in Detroit. "God's children have no sects."

Swamiji illustrated the difference between religion and creed in many ways. One of the most beautiful of these illustrations, and one which is not found elsewhere in his lectures or writings, was given during the course of his spectacular lecture in Detroit of March 11, "Christian Missions in India." "He told them," reads the report, "how the savage man might find a few jewels, and prizing them, tie them with a crude thong and string them about his neck. As he becomes

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slightly civilized he would perhaps exchange the thong for a string. Becoming still more enlightened he would fasten his jewels with a silken cord; and when possessed of a high civilization he would make an elaborate gold setting for his treasures. But throughout all the changes in settings the jewels—the essentials—would remain the same."

He also endeavored to define the fundamental principles of religion itself. "Religion," he said, according to a Detroit report, "is the manifestation of the soul nature," or, as he wrote about this same time to his Madrasi disciple, Kidi, "Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man." One of his unique illustrations of the soul's struggle to realize its own innate perfection is contained in a lecture in Memphis and is worth repeating here. "If you put a simple molecule of air in the bottom of a glass of water it at once begins a struggle to join the infinite atmosphere above. So it is with the soul. It is struggling to regain its pure nature and to free itself from this material body. It wants to regain its own infinite expansion. This is everywhere the same." Again in Detroit he said, "A bubble of air in a glass of water strives to join with the mass of air without; in oil, vinegar and other materials of differing density its efforts are less or more retarded according to the liquid. So the soul struggles through various mediums for the attainment of its individual infinity." But realizing the divinity within did not constitute the whole of the one religion which Swamiji was seeking to define during his first year in America; as is seen from a study of his complete message, his idea of one religion embraced many other aspects of human life. (Unfortunately I am not able to trace each separate step of his evolving thought in this connection, for in the material at present available to me there are not many indications of how all the many facets of his message were integrated into a single whole. It is clear, however, that as time went on, more and more streams entered the current of his thought—each to find its fulfillment in his ultimate message.)

In a subsidiary attempt to find a basis for religious unity Swamiji often pointed out the historical relationship between Eastern and Western religions, declaring, for instance, to the indignation of the orthodox, that Buddhism was the foundation of the Christian religion, particularly of the Roman Catholic Church. He also dwelt upon the common cultural heritage of all Indo-European peoples. "By comparing philology," reads a report of his lecture in Streator on October 8, 1893, "he sought to establish the long admitted

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relationship between the Aryan races and their descendants in the new world." Throughout his tour Swamiji spoke in a like vein. An excerpt from a Detroit paper reads: "In ancient times they spoke Sanscrit. . . . In the words father, mother, sister, brother, etc. the Sanscrit gave very similar pronunciations. This and other facts lead him to think we all come from the common stock, Aryans. Nearly all branches of this race have lost their identity."

In the common descent of Europeans and Hindus Swamiji saw a justification for building a unified civilization. During a dinner party in Detroit he voiced this idea. A report of this conversation written by one of the dinner guests reads: "The mission of Kananda is . . . one that should commend itself to every lover of humanity. He hopes to see the best of our material philosophy and progress infused into Hindoo civilization, and that, also, we may take lessons from them, until we shall all become, as was once in ages past, brother Aryans, possessing a common civilization—the exalted philosophy of non-self, being alike without sect or creed in oneness with God." On the East Coast Swamiji again sought to impress his listeners with the cultural and racial kinship of Eastern and Western peoples. A Northampton report of one of his lectures was headed "An Evening With Our Hindoo Cousins," and read, or, rather, continued: "For Swami Vivekananda proved conclusively that all our neighbors across the water, even the remotest, are our close cousins, differing only a trifle in color, language, customs and religion."

Swamiji's active interest in the founding of an international university, or "Temple Universal," whose faculty was to "include professors selected from all religions," is yet another indication that he was seeking ways and means by which the unity of religions could be achieved. In Baltimore he envisioned this university, which was to be located near Boston, as one "where all the religions of the world can be taught," and which "may serve to educate a superior kind of missionary for work in India."

Although the international university—which the Rev. Hiram Vrooman referred to as "one of Mr. Vivekananda's pet ideas"—did not materialize, a near approach to it was the Monsalvat School for the Study of Comparative Religions, founded at Greenacre in 1896 by Swamiji's friends, Miss Sarah Farmer and Dr. Lewis G. Janes. One object of this school was, Miss Farmer said, "to train missionaries for the work in foreign lands, . . . where they would go, not to quarrel but to meet on the common plane between religions"—a statement

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which sounds very much as though Miss Farmer and Swamiji had been conversing on the subject.

It is important to notice that Swamiji was the first prophet to define thoroughly and teach explicitly the unity of all religions. As is evidenced by his lectures, his letters and his other writings, the search for this unity was continually in his mind, almost like a driving force which gave him no rest. One might wonder why this was so. Was it because, being a philosopher as well as a prophet, he naturally and persistently sought to formulate the one principle behind all religious phenomena? Or was it because, being essentially a prophet, he was aware that the world—politically, economically, socially and culturally—was rapidly becoming a close-knit whole, which could be stable only if a unity was also found among religions—a unity not dogmatically imposed, but inherent in religions themselves? Or again, was it because he understood Sri Ramakrishna's message to be that of one religion? Possibly Swamiji was motivated by all these three considerations, yet the strongest motive must have been his understanding of his Master's life. True, one does not find in the available teachings of Sri Ramakrishna many indications that he sought to present the one religion underlying all religions. Rather, we find the doctrine that all religions in their several forms are good and true, that none should be disturbed. While Swamiji by no means repudiated this teaching, he seems to have understood it in a deeper sense than it is generally understood and, as we have seen, sought from the very first days of the Parliament to formulate a comprehensive doctrine which would include every religion and creed.

We do not find in his early lectures, talks and interviews, however, any indication of how this one religion was to be conceived in detail, of how the prevalent religions or creeds were to make their adjustments with it, or of how it was to be formulated and taught so that it would be inclusive of all the spiritual aspirations, efforts and experiences of man. These were problems which no doubt occupied Swamiji's mind during the latter part of his lecture tour, and which were ultimately to find their solution in his affirmation of Vedanta.

In Swamiji's effort to explain the essentials of religion to the American people and also in his effort to present India in her true light, he laid a great deal of stress upon India's religious maturity—her knowledge of and adherence to the lofty principles of spirituality. But among practical-minded Americans the question inevitably arose

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why, if India's religion was so superior to that of the West, she was so backward materially. This was not necessarily a taunting or thoughtless question, nor was it one which Swamiji passed off as irrelevant. Although he often rebuked the American people for "dollar-worship," he was a great admirer of America's inventive genius, its spirit of enterprise, its gift of organization and, above all, its elevation of the common man. He who had at heart the welfare of man in every respect—physical and mental, as well as spiritual—could never belittle material progress as such. Indeed, one of his fondest desires was to bring material well-being to India. But the problem was how to do this without in any way jeopardizing her spiritual outlook on life.

To many Hindus and also to some Americans the combination of spirituality and material prosperity has seemed to pose no particular problem. It is generally taken for granted that a spiritual and material renascence go almost hand in hand and that the strong revival of India's spiritual power, ushered in by Sri Ramakrishna, will automatically bring prosperity in its wake. Yet Swamiji never made this assumption. Being a thorough student of history and of human nature, he clearly recognized that religious development and material advancement have always in the past been mutually exclusive and that their desired combination in the future could not be left to nature or to chance. Although he declared again and again that a spiritual renascence was India's only hope, he did not unrealistically imagine that a golden age of material well-being would follow as a matter of course.

In answer to a question put to him during a discussion in Memphis as to why India's religion had not elevated her among the nations of the world, Swamiji said: "Because that is not the sphere of any religion. My people are the most moral in the world, or quite as much as any other race. They are more considerate of their fellow man's rights, and even those of dumb animals, but they are not materialists. No religion has ever advanced the thought or inspiration [sic] of a nation or people. In fact, no great [material?] achievement has ever been attained in the history of the world that religion has not retarded. Your boasted Christianity has not proven an exception in this respect. Your Darwins, your Mills, your Humes, have never received the endorsement of your prelates." One is reminded of his statement made a year later during his lecture in Brooklyn on "The Ideals of Womanhood" to the effect that "the development of all monasticism had always meant the degeneration of women." "I'll bend my knees to every

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prophet in every religion and clime," he continued, "but candor compels me to say that here in the West the development of women was brought about by men like John Stuart Mill and the French revolutionary philosophers. Religion has done something, no doubt, but not all."

During the course of an interview in Detroit Swamiji again expressed his belief that adherence to moral and spiritual principles had retarded India's material progress. "Where brute strength and bloodshed has advanced other nations," he is reported as having said, "India has deprecated such brutal manifestations and by the law of the survival of the fittest, which applies to nations as well as to individuals, it has fallen behind as a power on the earth in the material sense." On the other hand, he was keenly aware that those nations which had forged ahead materially had done so at the sacrifice of their spiritual development.

Swamiji faced the fact that when the best energies of a people had been devoted to spiritual development, their material life had suffered, and when those energies had been spent in improving material life, spirituality had been lost. So had it always been in the past, and so would it be in the future—unless some remedy were found. As the bearer of Sri Ramakrishna's message and as one who had come to the earth for the good of mankind, he was bound to seek that remedy, and it was inevitable that during his wanderings in India and America he should give a great deal of thought to the problem of how spirituality and material prosperity could be combined to the advantage of both.

"I believe that the Hindoo faith has developed the spiritual in its devotees at the expense of the material," he is quoted as having said in Memphis, "and I think that in the Western world the contrary is true. By uniting the materialism of the West with the spiritualism of the East I believe much can be accomplished." In Detroit he again expressed his belief that material progress and spiritual development need not, and should not, be forever opposed. "May not one combine the energy of the lion and the gentleness of the lamb?" he asked during an interview, and according to the report, continued by intimating that "perhaps the future holds the conjunction of the East and the West, a combination which would be productive of marvelous results."

We know that in his Vedanta—particularly in his teaching of karma yoga and in his emphasis on the divinity of man—Swamiji later worked out the means by which this combination could be achieved, thus assuring that the advent of Sri Ramakrishna would indeed usher

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in a golden age of total well-being. "From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age," he wrote to his brother monks from America, and continued: "You are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!" It was Swamiji who laid down the lines this work was to take, and there can be no doubt that his solution of the problem of how man might devote his energies to spiritual realization and yet not neglect the material needs of the world constitutes one of his greatest contributions to both the religious and the secular thought of the modern age.

Swamiji was, of course, not the first Indian teacher to try to combine material life and spirituality. The first, barring some Upanishadic sages, was Sri Krishna whose teachings in the Bhagavad Gita deal in general with the same problems with which Swamiji was concerned. But just as Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: "Through long lapse of time this yoga has been lost to the world," so could Swamiji say that Sri Krishna's teachings had, in turn, been gradually forgotten and that he himself was reviving and restating them, blending with them the spirit of compassionate service. In this respect alone he could well declare, as he did to Swami Turiyananda: "I have discovered a new path for mankind."

There was always, we can be sure, a reason for whatever Swamiji taught. Although, as I have pointed out, one of the primary purposes of his lecture tour was to explain Hinduism to the American people, he evidently felt from the first that an exposition of Buddhism must form an essential part of that explanation. Speaking with the Vrooman brothers at their lecture series on "Dynamic Religion," he cited Buddha's teachings as a remedy for social ills. "The remedy," he said, "is not to place trick against trick and force against force. The only remedy is in making unselfish men and women. You may enact laws to cure present evils, but they will be of no avail. . . . [Buddha] always insisted upon this fundamental truth, that we are to be pure and holy, and that we are to help others to be holy also. He believed that man must go to work and help others, find his soul in others, find his life in others." In Brooklyn Swamiji spoke of Buddha as "the great one, who never thought a thought and never performed a deed except for the good of others; who had the greatest intellect and heart, taking in all mankind and all the animals, all-embracing, ready to give up his life for the highest angels as well as for the lowest worms."

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How much this sounds like Swamiji himself, whose heart responded to the cry of all humanity and who once said, "I would be willing to go to a hundred thousand hells if thereby I could relieve the sufferings of even one man!" The serenity and compassion of Buddha were reflected in Swamiji's features. One remembers how in London a reporter remarked upon his "most striking resemblance to the classic face of Buddha," and how Sister Nivedita wrote in 1901: "Mr. Tata told me that when Swami was in Japan everyone who saw him was immediately struck by his likeness to Buddha."

In a world which was growing ever more complex, in which religious dogmas no longer served as goads and sanctions for moral action, in which blind faith had lost its strength as a bulwark against despair and in which the religious outlook was thought to be incompatible with reason, Swamiji knew that the elements of self-reliance, reason and compassion must each play a large part in any religion that would meet the needs of the times. Standing free from the current dogmas, philosophies and traditions of India, Buddha had blazed a path of reason. This was, in effect, what modern man also was attempting to do. Like Buddha, he was skeptical and iconoclastic; Buddha's agnosticism, his pioneering spirit, his thorough-going rationality certainly appealed to him. But was he ready, as Buddha had been, to push reason to its utmost limit and venture upon that tremendous voyage of the spirit which alone leads to moral and spiritual perfection? Clearly, he was not. It was no doubt in an effort to inspire the Western world to follow the path of highest reason to its end—an end which nullifies all self and which alone can bridge the gap between matter and spirit—that Swamiji so often spoke of Buddha's life and teachings. He was perhaps also impelled by the fact that this age, if it is to survive, is one in which pure and uncalculating sympathy with all men must be a predominant motive of action. No greater example of unconditional and unselective compassion could be found than Lord Buddha, and since the elements of self-reliance, reason and compassion formed a large part of Swamiji's message to the world, he could not but give prominence to this most independent, most rational and most compassionate of all men. It was, to be sure, no accident that in his book, "Karma Yoga," he cited Lord Buddha as an example of the supreme karma-yogin.

But there were other reasons for Swamiji's pronounced interest in Buddhism, and although these are not strictly pertinent to a discussion of his lectures in America, some reference to them will not be out of

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place. The fact is that until recently Buddhism has been thought of in India as non-Hindu and has thereby been excluded from the Hindu's consciousness of his heritage. If we consider that the origin, the development and the flourishing of Buddhism occupied about a thousand years of India's history, it is clear that the Hindu heritage, minus Buddhism, has a hole in it about a millennium wide. Unlike Hindu teachers of the past, such as Shankara, who repudiated Buddhism, Swamiji saw little reason why those thousand years of Buddhistic achievement, both in India and abroad, should not be accepted as an integral part of the Hindu heritage. Moreover, he wanted to imbue Hinduism with the motif of compassion. As is well known, Swamiji identified himself with the Mahayana school of Buddhism, which was opposed not only to the nihilistic doctrines of the Hinayana school but also to the self-centeredness which nihilism tended to breed among its followers. To him, Mahayana Buddhism, which he held to be the older of the two schools, more clearly expressed the humanity of Buddha than did Hinayana, and it was this humanity, this largeness of spirit and all-embracing sympathy, that Swamiji felt was wanting in Hinduism. It was not that Hinduism excluded the spirit of mercy, of charitableness and of good will, but that the often spurious desire of the average Hindu to become God-absorbed had, generally speaking, pushed the teachings of service into the background. As a result, compassion had not for a long time been a prime motivating power of the Hindu nation, and it was in this sense that Swamiji found Hinduism lacking. As he later wrote, "Taking up this plea of sattva [illumination], the country has been slowly sinking in the ocean of tamas, or dark ignorance."

"This state of things must be removed," he wrote to Alasinga as early as August, 1893, "not by destroying religion, but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith, and joining with it the wonderful sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism—Buddhism." A month later he said at the Parliament of Religions: "Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realize what the separation has shown to us, that the Buddhists cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmanas, nor the Brahmana without the heart of the Buddhist. . . . Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmana with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanizing power, of the Great Master."

How often Swamiji wrote from America to his brother monks and

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disciples, exhorting them to devote themselves to the service of man! "If you want any good to come," he wrote to his monastic brothers in the early summer of 1894, "just throw your ceremonials in the waters of the Ganga and worship the visible God, He who wears all these various human forms. This world is His universal form. Worshipping Him means serving the world; this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials. . . . My salutation to those of you who have any brain, and my earnest prayer is that you spread like fire and preach this worship of the Virat [God visible as the universe]—a form of worship which was never undertaken in our country." In this same letter, which is one of his most inspired and in which he himself said, "I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to write in this way," he wrote: "He alone is a child of Sri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation. . . . Whoever will be ready to serve him—no, not him but his children—the poor and the downtrodden, the sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm—who will be ready to serve these, in them he will manifest himself." Again he wrote: "I can secure my own good only by doing your good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. . . . The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others do the same."

That this idea was not a passing one with Swamiji is evidenced by his letter of May 30, 1897, to Pramada Das Mitra in which he wrote: "Another truth I have realized is that altruistic service alone is religion; the rest, such as ceremonial observances, is madness—it is wrong even to hanker after one's own salvation. He alone becomes liberated who gives up everything for others, whereas those who worry their brains day and night thinking 'My salvation!' 'My salvation!' wander about to the ruin of both their present and future well-being. I have seen this happen many a time with my own eyes."

To Swamiji, Buddha was an outcome of the teachings of the Upanishads, an extension or demonstration of the ancient Vedanta. Yet this had never been sufficiently recognized by the Hindus. By embracing Buddha's great heart and incorporating it in his message to the world, Swamiji was to revive that lost aspect of his country's religious heritage, he was to set afire a philosophy that had grown cold through lack of heart, through lack of spirit of service to others. Hinduism, he knew, would become transformed through the acceptance of Buddhism as a part of itself, would become immeasurably richer, immensely more self-confident, and full of an all-embracing sympathy.

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Only thus could Hinduism fill the role of spiritual leadership to the world, which Swamiji knew it must.

But Swamiji's attempt to formulate one religion, his concern with resolving the conflict between material prosperity and spirituality, and his insistence upon introducing the motive of compassion into the lives and works of men did not constitute the only elements that went into the evolution of the message he was to call Vedanta. So comprehensive and so diverse was this message by 1895 that there can be little doubt that during its formulative period he pondered over many other problems of modern life. There were, for instance, the current conflicts between science and religion, rationalism and faith, utilitarianism and mysticism, the spirit of self-reliance and the spirit of submission. While these nineteenth-century dilemmas may have been on Swamiji's mind during his wandering days in India, his tour in America must have brought them into greater prominence, and it can be safely assumed that his contact with the intellectual and the thoughtful—particularly on the East Coast—made him deliberate upon them with greater intensity than ever before. Knowing, as we do, that everything that concerned man was of deep concern to him and knowing of the vast knowledge he possessed of human life in all its phases, we can be sure that he studied and understood modern civilization with the combined insight of a sociologist, psychologist, historian, philosopher and mystic. As was said of him, he acquired "the greatest familiarity with the institutions of this country, religious, political and social." Nor was this familiarity acquired through contact with intellectuals alone; rather, as he said during the course of his Midwestern tour, he spoke also with laborers and farmers; his finger was, as it were, on the pulse of the nation. Being born a world teacher, he must have felt a spontaneous urge to seek a comprehensive solution to all the many and complicated problems that beset and imperiled the world. Indeed, I feel sure that the latter part of 1894 was a period of great mental stress for him. New ideas, new answers must have pressed forward in his mind, some to be rejected and replaced by others, until by the beginning of 1895 the final answer—Vedanta—emerged in clear outline.

As has been pointed out in Chapter Eleven, one can detect a change in Swamiji's thought during the summer of 1894 and the beginnings, at least, of a new concept of his mission in America. But it was very likely not until he attended the Greenacre Conferences in July-August

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that the importance of teaching and giving intensive spiritual training to Americans began to be apparent to him. Whatever else may be said of the people at Greenacre, they were, as Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale, "healthy, young, *sincere* and holy men and women." "I teach them all Shivoham, Shivoham," he wrote with evident delight, "and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds." As we know, he held classes in monistic Vedanta under the Lysekloster pines, and, using as his text the "Avadhuta Gita," taught his receptive and eager listeners the very essence of spirituality. In Chapter Eleven I have dwelt upon the meaning of Greenacre in Swamiji's life in America; suffice it to say that one would not be far wrong in believing that his stay there marked a turning point in his attitude toward his American work and that he henceforth began to think of it as valuable for its own sake as well as for that of India. A study of his letters amply bears this out.

"The whole world requires Light," he wrote to Alasinga at the end of August. "It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit, of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come." Swamiji's first mention of teaching Vedanta in America appears in a letter of September 21, when he wrote to this same Madrasi disciple, "I am teaching Vedanta in various ways." Unfortunately we have not been able to find any record of the lectures he gave in August and September of 1894, but, although we cannot assume from the above that he had already formulated his message as Vedanta, it is clear that he was deliberately disseminating at least some ideas of the Vedanta philosophy.

One indication that during the fall of 1894 he was coming to close grips with the multifarious problems of mankind and was seeking a clear solution of them is that the desire to write, which he had had in July, became insistent in September. "Today this vagabond lama was seized with a desire of going right along scribbling," he wrote to Mary Hale on September 13. And to Mrs. Bull on September 19, "What I want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my thoughts." "I have not been able to write a line yet for my proposed book," he wrote regretfully to Alasinga on September 21. "Perhaps I may be able to take it in hand later on." As we know, Mrs. Bull offered him her house in Cambridge for this purpose—an invitation he would not have accepted had not his need for a quiet place where he

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could ponder deeply been urgent. But even at Mrs. Bull's Swamiji was not able to take his book in hand. "You must remember," he wrote to Alasinga on October 27, "that I have to work incessantly in this country and that I have no time to put together my thoughts in the form of a book."

A clue to the direction his thought was taking during this period can, however, be found in his lengthy reply to the Madras Address, which he was "busy writing" around the end of September and in which he strongly stressed the point that the Jnana-kanda portion of the Vedas—the Upanishads, or Vedanta—stands as the basis of all the subsequent religious sects and schools of Hinduism. "If it be asked to point out the system of thought toward which as a centre, all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have converged," he wrote, "if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa [the "Vedanta-Sutras"] will unquestionably be pointed out as constituting all that. . . . He will find that all these various teachers and schools have as their basis that system, whose authority is the Shruti [the Upanishads], the Gita its divine commentary, the Shariraka-Sutras its organized system, and all the different sects of India, from the Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharyas to the poor despised Mehtar disciples of Lalguru, are different manifestations." In other words, Swamiji was finding in Vedanta the basic unity and innate strength of all aspects of Hindu religion. His paper was a direct call to his countrymen to "Let the lion of Vedanta roar." "Let us take our stand," he urged, "on the one central truth in our religion—the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists and Jains alike—the Spirit of man, the Atman of man, the immortal, birthless, all-pervading, eternal Soul of man."

While one cannot but recognize on reading this reply to the Madras Address that Swamiji's attention was still largely centered in India, one must also recognize that he was at this time keenly aware of Western needs. "Today," he wrote in the reply, "the West is awakening to its wants, and the 'true self of man' and the 'spirit' is the watchword of the advanced school of Western theologians. . . . Is it not curious that, whilst under the terrific onset of modern scientific research, all the old forts of Western dogmatic religions are crumbling into dust; . . . whilst the vast majority of thoughtful Western humanity have broken asunder all their ties with the church, and are drifting about in a sea of unrest, the religions which have drunk the water of life at that fountain of light—the Vedas—Hinduism and Buddhism, alone are

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reviving? The restless Western atheist or agnostic finds in the Gita or in the Dhammapada the only place where his soul can anchor." One must further recognize the fact that Swamiji was finding in Vedanta the rallying point not only of all Hindu sects but of *every* religion, Indian or Western: "As the Vedas are the only scriptures which teach this real absolute God, of which all other ideas of God are but minimized and limited visions; as the Shruti takes the devotee gently by the hand, and leads him from one stage to another, through all the stages that are necessary for him to travel to reach the Absolute; and as all other religions represent one or other of these stages in an unprogressive and crystallized form, all the other religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless, eternal Vedic religion." Clearly, it was but a step from this concept to the formulation of Vedanta as his message to the West.

Coupled with his growing awareness of America's need for India's religion was his growing belief that India's hope for survival lay not only in reviving the pure religion of the Upanishads but in spreading that religion broadcast. This conviction, which was later to ring like a call to battle through his lectures to his own countrymen ("Up India and conquer the world with your spirituality!"), seemed to find its first explicit expression in his reply to the Calcutta Address, which he mailed to India on November 18, 1894. Although a portion of this letter has already been quoted in Chapter Eight, it will bear repeating here. "Give and take is the law," Swamiji wrote, "and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life."

In December there is definite proof that Swamiji's message to the West was taking conscious form, for from December 5 to 28 we find him in Cambridge teaching a philosophy to which he gave the name "Vedanta." Although we have no records of these Cambridge classes, we can be almost certain that they were preparatory to his New York work and that during the course of them he experimented with methods of teaching adapted to the Western mind and gave a unified form to his message. From a bulletin later printed by the Brooklyn Ethical Association we learn that during the Cambridge classes he

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"helped many students [of Harvard University] in the solution of philosophical problems in which they had become involved in their course of study"; and surely we can infer that he helped not only Harvard students to solve their problems through the application of Vedanta but many others who attended his classes.

As has been mentioned, in the fall of 1894 new thoughts were surging in Swamiji's mind and were demanding written expression. Yet he found little time to write. "I am writing no book on Hinduism now," he wrote to Alasinga toward the end of the year, "I am simply jotting down my thoughts." That these thoughts were concerned with Vedanta is evidenced by the fact that in this same letter he urged Alasinga and his other Madrasi disciples to give their minds to its study. "If you could start a magazine on Vedantic lines it would further our object. . . . Expand your hearts and hopes as wide as the world. Study Sanskrit, especially the three Bhashyas [Commentaries] on the Vedanta. Be ready, for I have many plans for the future." The importance of the study of Vedanta was by no means a passing thought with Swamiji, for in January we find him still insisting upon it.

But while it seems reasonable to infer that Swamiji's "jottings" were concerned with Vedanta as an answer to world problems, they have remained undiscovered. In Volumes IV and V of "The Complete Works" we find synopses of two books that he intended to write, but these do not seem relevant to the period we are considering. In its May 1955 issue, however, *Prabuddha Bharata* has published an unfinished article by him, the contents of which seem to be in keeping with the trend of his thought in 1894 and 1895. Although this article is unfortunately undated as well as unfinished, I do not think one would be far wrong in assuming that it was written either in 1895 or during the last part of 1894. Indeed it may possibly be the jottings which Swamiji mentioned; for remembering his concern with finding a unity among the various religions of the world, one finds it hard to believe that the article was not written while this search was under way and drawing to its close. A portion reads as follows:

> Strictly speaking there are no absolutely racial religions, yet it may be said that . . . the Vedic, the Mosaic, and the Avestan religions are confined to the races to which they originally belonged; while the Buddhistic, the Christian, and the Mohammedan religions have been from their very beginning "spreading" religions.

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The struggle will be between the Buddhists and Christians and Mohammedans to conquer the world and the racial religions also will have unavoidably to join in the struggle. Each one of these religions, racial or "spreading," has already been split into various branches and has undergone vast changes, consciously or unconsciously, to adapt itself to varying circumstances. This very fact shows that not one of them is fitted alone to be the religion of the entire human race. Each religion being the effect of certain peculiarities of the race it sprang from, and being in turn the cause of the intensification and preservation of those very peculiarities, not one of them can fit the universal human nature. Not only so, but there is a negative element in each. Each one helps the growth of a certain part of human nature, but represses everything else which the race from which it sprang did not have. Thus for one religion to become universal would be dangerous and degenerating to man.

Now the history of the world shows that the two dreams, viz., that of a universal political empire and that of a universal religious empire, have been long before mankind; but that again and again the plans of the greatest conquerors had been frustrated by the splitting up of his territories before he could conquer a considerable part of the earth and that similarly every religion had been split into sects before it was fairly out of its cradle.

Yet it seems to be true that the solidarity of the human race, social as well as religious, with a scope for infinite variation, is the plan of nature; and if the line of least resistance is the true line of action it seems to me that this splitting up of each religion into sects is the preservation of religion, by frustrating the tendency to rigid sameness, as well as the clear indication to us of the line of procedure.

The end seems, therefore, to be not destruction but a multiplication of sects until each individual is a sect unto himself. Again, a background of unity will come by the fusion of all the existing religions into one grand philosophy. In the mythologies or the ceremonials there will never be unity, because we differ more in the concrete than in the abstract. Even while accepting the same principles, men will differ as to the greatness of their ideal teachers.

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So, by this fusion will be found a unity of philosophy as the basis of union [of religions], leaving each at liberty to choose his teacher or his form as illustrations of that unity. This fusion is what has been naturally going on for thousands of years; only, by mutual antagonism, it has been woefully held back.

Instead of antagonizing, therefore, we must help all such interchange of ideas between different races, by sending teachers to each other, so as to educate humanity in all the various religions of the world; but we must insist, as the great Buddhist Emperor of India, Ashoka, did in the second century before Christ, not to abuse others, nor to try to make a living out of others' faults; but to help, to sympathize with, and to enlighten all.

Whatever might be the date on which Swamiji wrote the above, it is certain that by the end of December, 1894, he was finding in Vedanta "the one grand philosophy" and that he was fully conscious of the nature and dimensions of his message, for it was on the last day of the year that he declared with the startling directness of a true prophet: "I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East"—a statement which can leave no doubt in anyone's mind that he had arrived at a clear knowledge of his mission. A few weeks later he settled in New York to open his classes on Vedanta. (It should be noted here that for a while he associated the word "Yoga" with Vedanta in naming his message. Later on, however, he was satisfied to use simply "Vedanta," no doubt recognizing that it was inclusive of Yoga.)

Almost immediately after the beginning of 1895 Swamiji embarked with full vigor and full assurance upon his world mission, that of teaching Vedanta as he conceived it—a religion and philosophy that would suit all different temperaments and different stages of religious development and yet meet man's highest spiritual needs; a religion and philosophy, also, that could be practiced in every walk of life, that would be of benefit to every aspect of human existence and would solve such problems as the conflict between science and religion, utilitarianism and mysticism. At the same time, as we find in his letters to his brother monks and disciples, he continued to stress the fact that Vedanta could be of immense service to the Indian people in their national regeneration and to urge its study. On January 3

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he wrote to Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer: "After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan. First, it would be well to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend its scope; to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhashyas [Commentaries on Vedanta] and Philosophies including a knowledge of the other religions of the world." On January 12, he wrote to Alasinga: "We must have a College in Madras to teach comparative religions, Sanskrit, the different schools of Vedanta and some European languages." Swamiji's insistence on the importance of the study of the three aspects of Vedanta is shown by the fact that he continued to urge it, writing on April 4 to Alasinga, "My idea is for you to start a society where people could be taught the Vedas and the Vedanta with the commentaries. Work on these lines at present."

It is true, of course, that Swamiji gave greater importance to Advaita as the answer to world problems than to the two other Vedantic schools. On April 24, he wrote to Mr. E. T. Sturdy: "I quite agree with you that only the Advaita Philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from 'devil worship' and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man." But he by no means discarded the other Vedantic schools of thought. Indeed, it was in all three that he found the unity of religions, or, rather, Religion itself, which he had been seeking so long to formulate.

"Now I will tell you my discovery," he wrote to Alasinga on May 6, 1895. "All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion. The Vedanta applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism. The first stage, Dvaita, applied to the ideas of ethnic groups of Europe is Christianity; as applied to the Semitic groups, Mohammedanism. The Advaita as applied in its Yoga-perception form, is Buddhism, etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta. The application must vary according to the different needs, surroundings and other circumstances of different nations. You will find that although the philosophy is the same, the Shaktas, Shaivas, etc. apply it to their own special cult and *forms*. Now, in your journal write article after article on these three systems, showing their harmony as one following after the other, and at the same time keeping off the ceremonial forms altogether. That is, preach the philosophy,

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the spiritual part, and let people suit it to their own forms. I want to write a book on this subject, therefore I want the three Bhashyas, but only one volume of the Ramanuja has reached me as yet."

Swamiji's desire to write this book was persistent. In June of 1895 he wrote to Mary Hale: "The three great commentaries of the Vedanta philosophy belonging to the three great sects of dualists, qualified monists and monists are being sent to me from India. . . . Then I will have an intellectual feast indeed. I intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy." Again, in 1896 he wrote to Alasinga from London: "I am busy writing something big on the Vedanta philosophy. I am busy collecting passages from the various Vedas bearing on the Vedanta in its threefold aspect. . . . It would be a pity to leave the West, without leaving something of the philosophy in book form." But although Swamiji did not write this book, which was evidently to be a sort of textbook on Vedanta, he certainly did not leave the West without leaving "something of the philosophy in book form." His recorded lectures given in 1895 and 1896, his "Karma Yoga," "Raja Yoga," "Bhakti Yoga" and "Jnana Yoga," are in themselves a large work on the subject and, together with later lectures and writings, constitute a message that will, as he himself said toward the end of his life, be enough to last the world for fifteen hundred years.

Parallel to the development of Swamiji's message during the fall of 1894 was a decided change in his plan of work. We know that through 1893 and most of 1894 he was reluctant to remain long in America. The major part of his attention was centered in India ; and while it is true that throughout his lecture tour he shed the blessings of a divine prophet upon the American people and also taught them a great deal of religion, his evident motive was to find means of bettering the material condition of the Indian masses. By the middle of March, 1894, he had had enough of the West, and being thoroughly disgusted with lecturing to large crowds, wrote to Mary Hale from Detroit, "I shall come back to Chicago for a day or two at least before I go out of this country." Yet he remained.

One cannot help wondering what held him in America. At first glance it would appear that it was his determination to raise funds, against all odds, for his Indian work, but more probably it was his knowledge that he was acting in accordance with the divine will. Although he was seldom explicit in regard to the details of the guidance

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he received from the Mother of the Universe or from Sri Ramakrishna, he often hinted at them, and now and then more than hinted. I have heard, for instance, from a monk of the Ramakrishna Order that Swamiji once confided to a brother monk, Swami Vijnanananda, that during his lecture tour in America he sometimes received direct instruction from Sri Ramakrishna as to which places he should or should not visit. Knowing this, we can be sure that he was being literal when he wrote on May 28, 1894, to Alasinga, "I do not know when I am going back to India. It is better to leave everything in the hands of Him who is at my back directing me." And again, "I am in His hands, . . . I will go back [to India] when I get the command." Thus while Swamiji sometimes felt that he was doing little permanent good through lecturing here and there and that from a financial point of view he could not "succeed at all," he kept on. In the depth of his being he must have known that he was God's prophet to America and that he had a message to give to the West. Yet as late as the end of September, 1894, he was writing: "I long to go back to the Himalayan quiet," and again: "I do not know when I come back but I have seen enough of this country I think, and so soon will go over to Europe and then to India."

A conclusive indication that in the fall Swamiji was becoming conscious that his mission must include the West is that around the end of October a definite change in tone appears in his letters. Quite suddenly his repeatedly expressed longing to return to India disappears altogether and in its place is the repeated assertion that America is a great field for the propagation of high ideas. On October 22 he writes from Baltimore to Swami Ramakrishnananda: "There is no end of work here—I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will fall there it will fructify, be it today, or in a hundred years." And the next day he writes to Vehemia Chand, "By this time I have become one of their own teachers."

Perhaps the clearest sign that his plans had changed is contained in his letter of October 27 to Alasinga: "I think I have worked enough, now I want to rest and to teach a little to those that have come to me from my Gurudeva [Sri Ramakrishna]." Here one sees an indication of the form Swamiji's American work was later to take—the ripening of a desire which, as has been said, may have begun at Greenacre. Not only did Swamiji now desire to teach American disciples, but he obviously felt that such teaching was an essential part of his divine mission. "Look not for me," he wrote in this same letter. "Here is

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a grand field. What have I to do with this 'ism' or that 'ism'? I am the servant of the Lord, and where on earth is there a better field than here for propagating all high ideas? Here, where if one man is against me, a hundred hands are ready to help me ; here, where man feels for man, and women are goddesses."

It is true, of course, that Swamiji had always found in what he had called "this thoroughly materialistic country" "honourable exceptions" ; he had seen thousands of men and women respond to his ideas and had from the first looked upon the American women as "goddesses." But despite his early admiration for many aspects of Western civilization and despite his fondness for Americans, he had not previously regarded the country as "a grand field" for spreading his ideas. "All is right with them," he had written on September 25 in summation of the American character, "but that enjoyment is their God." Now in late autumn he wrote, "Tell the sapient sage who writes to me to finish my preaching work here and return home . . . that this country is more my home. . . . To return home! Where is the home? I do not care for liberation or for enjoyment, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, 'doing good to others like the spring season.' This is my religion." Shortly after, he wrote to Swami Brahmananda, "There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there in the company of fools—there is this difference as between heaven and hell." "My intention," he wrote toward the end of 1894, "is to do something permanent here, and with that object I am working day by day. I am every day gaining the confidence of the American people."

As time went on Swamiji expressed an ever-growing awareness of his ultimate mission and an ever-growing sense of responsibility in regard to it. For instance, in a letter to Swami Abhedananda, which is dated simply "1894," but which, in view of internal evidence, can be more accurately placed around the end of November or the beginning of December, he expressed a consciousness of his status as prophet. According to a literal translation of the original Bengali, which differs from that given in the English edition of "The Letters," he wrote: "As long as you gird up your loins and stand united behind me, there is no fear even if the whole world combines against us. Finally I have understood this much—that I shall have to assume a very high position."

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"I find," he writes on January 2, "I have a mission in this country also." And on January 11: "Know . . . that this is a grand field for my ideas, and that I do not care whether they are Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians, but those that love the Lord will always command my service." "I have a message, and I will give it after my own fashion," he wrote to Mary Hale on February 1. "I will neither Hinduize my message, nor Christianize nor make it any ize in the world. I will only Myize it and that is all." One cannot but conclude from such statements and others like them that Swamiji's attitude toward his American work had undergone a radical change, a change so great that on February 14 he wrote to Mrs. Bull, "Collecting funds even for a good work is not good for a Sannyasin. . . . I had these childish ideas of doing this and doing that. These appear like a hallucination to me now. I am getting out of them. . . . Perhaps these mad desires were necessary to bring me over to this country. And I thank the Lord for the experience."

While the temptation is sometimes great to attribute such statements to a mere variation in mood and to dismiss them summarily, a careful, chronological study of Swamiji's letters shows unmistakably that during the last part of 1894 and the beginning of 1895 he was becoming keenly aware of his world mission. One sees, moreover, that the change in his thought was permanent. Henceforth, whenever occasion arose, he reminded those who might otherwise forget it that his mission was not to India alone but to the world. "Truth is my God," he wrote to Alasinga in August of 1895, "the universe is my country. . . . I have a truth to teach, I, the child of God." And on September 9, "I know my mission in life, and no chauvinism about me ; I belong as much to India as to the world, no humbug about that." And again: "You must not forget that my interests are *international* and not Indian alone." A reader of "The Letters" can find for himself many more such passages—none of which, he will discover, appears before the last part of 1894.

The way in which Swamiji used the word Vedanta was somewhat his own. From what I have been able to learn, the term had been used in Northern India mainly to indicate the monistic interpretation of the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sutras. It was in this sense that Sri Ramakrishna himself often used it, distinguishing it from non-monistic Hindu doctrines—although sometimes he spoke also of the Vishishtadvaita (qualified monistic) school of Vedanta. "Here," he

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once said, referring to himself, "people of all sects come—Vaishnavas, Shaktas, Kartabhajas, Vedantists, and also members of the modern Brahmo Samaj." Or again, "I respect the Shaktas, the Vaishnavas, and also the Vedantists." In Southern India Vedanta was generally understood to include qualified monism and dualism as well as monism, but it was nevertheless applied only to faiths which had the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sutras as their philosophical basis. Never before Swamiji's time had the term been given such universal significance as he gave it. Never before had it been broadened into a philosophy and religion which included every faith of the world and every noble effort of man—reconciling spirituality and material advancement, faith and reason, science and mysticism, work and contemplation, service to man and absorption in God. Never before had it been conceived as the one universal religion, by accepting the principles of which the follower of any or no creed could continue along his own path and at the same time be able to identify himself with every other creed and aspect of religion.

A chronological study of Swamiji's use of the word Vedanta up until 1895 is extremely revealing. At the outset it should be said that in the press reports of the lectures and interviews included in this book the word Vedanta does not occur even once. In making this study, therefore, we have to depend for the most part upon his letters and other writings, such as his replies to the Madras and Calcutta Addresses. Apart from these, the other available records of Swamiji's thought prior to 1895 are the brief accounts given in "The Life" of his 1893 lecture in Hyderabad, to which I have referred in an earlier chapter, and the "Notes taken down in Madras, 1892-93," which are to be found in Volume VI of "The Complete Works."

Consulting these various sources, I find that Swamiji first used the word Vedanta in a letter of August 17, 1889, to Pramada Das Mitra, with whom he had been discussing the Brahma-Sutras. Here his uses of the word were purely academic and had no connection with his future message. In a second letter to Mr. Mitra, written on March 3, 1890, he said, "I am a very soft-natured man in spite of the stern Vedantic views I hold." These "stern Vedantic views" were, of course, those of Advaita Vedanta, the uncompromising monistic philosophy, in which he had been trained by Sri Ramakrishna and which therefore represented only his personal philosophy—not his message. In this same letter Swamiji also used "Vedanta" to apply exclusively to Advaita when he spoke of his Master as either the Avatara, "or else

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the ever-perfect divine man, whom the Vedanta speaks of as the free one, who assumes a body for the good of humanity." In regard to the "Notes taken down in Madras" in 1892-93, we find that although the word Vedas in the sense of Vedanta often occurs, there is no indication that he had at that time conceived his message to be Vedanta; indeed the word Vedanta as such does not occur at all. In "The Life," Swamiji is indirectly quoted as having said in his Hyderabad lecture of May, 1893, that he felt it an "imperative duty . . . to reveal to the world the incomparable glory of the Vedas and the Vedanta." But, as I have pointed out in Chapter Eight, it is highly doubtful that he actually said this. As far as *direct* quotations are concerned, it was not until May of 1894 that he again used the word Vedanta, when in a postscript to a letter to Professor Wright (see Chapter Ten) he remarked that "the 'booby' religion [of the Brahmo Samajists] could not hold its own against the old 'Vedanta'"—meaning Advaita Vedanta to which the Brahmo Samaj was opposed.

Clearly, in the above uses Swamiji had no thought of identifying his own message with Vedanta. On September 21, 1894, however, he wrote to Alasinga, "I am teaching Vedanta in various ways," which, as I have already pointed out, shows that he was now, at least partly, identifying his message with Vedanta and disseminating many of its ideas through his lectures and classes. In a letter of September 25 to Swami Ramakrishnananda he writes, apropos of Christian Scientists: "They are Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them onto the Bible." While this does not indicate anything more than it says, a large part of this letter is a thunderous affirmation of Advaita Vedanta and evinces his desire to make Advaita a vital part of his message to India. Around this same time he wrote his reply to the Madras Address, which contains abundant evidence that he was identifying his message to India with Vedanta and that he was also aware that India's religion in its pure form was essential to the West.

Henceforth—that is, after September—Swamiji began to use the word Vedanta as more or less synonymous with his message—although a complete identification of the two did not take place until a few months later. On October 27 he writes to Alasinga: "It is good to talk glibly about the Vedanta, but how hard to carry out even its least precepts!" Had Swamiji not been thinking of his own teaching in terms of Vedanta he would not in this instance have called his disciple, whom he had been instructing and inspiring through innumerable

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letters from America, a follower of Vedanta. Even a cursory reading of this letter will show that throughout he was speaking in the spirit of Advaita Vedanta; he could not, therefore, have been using the word Vedanta to refer to the fact that Alasinga had been born and brought up in a family devoted to Vaishnavism—the qualified monistic school of Vedanta as taught by Ramanuja.

I have already referred to the fact that toward the end of 1894 Swamiji began to urge Alasinga and his other Madrasi disciples to take up the study of the three Bhashyas on the Vedanta. I need not, therefore, repeat that quotation here; but it was surely a telling evidence that he was now recognizing Vedanta to be his message to the world. His next use of the word Vedanta is found in a letter written to Swami Shivananda around the end of 1894 in which he equated Sri Ramakrishna's message to the total truth of religion. "Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahamsa first," he wrote, "one can never understand the real import of the Vedas and the Vedanta, of the Bhagavata and the other Puranas. . . . He was the living commentary to the Vedas and to their aim. . . . A single word of his is to me far weightier than the Vedas and the Vedanta." By this Swamiji did not mean that Sri Ramakrishna taught anything which was not a part of the Vedas and the Vedanta, but rather that his utterances were direct living revelations and therefore of far more value than written texts. (In a later Bengali writing entitled "Hinduism and Sri Ramakrishna" we find him describing his Master as "Veda-murti," the Embodiment of the Vedas.) In December, as has been seen, Swamiji wrote to Mary Hale of his classes on Vedanta—a clear indication that he was now designating his teachings by that name.

Thus we see that from the summer of 1894 onward simultaneous developments, keeping pace with one another, were taking place in Swamiji's thought along three lines: there was the evolution of his message, the change in his plan of work and the increasing degree in which he identified his own message with Vedanta. All three were aspects of a single event—the emergence of his world mission, and all three have left their undeniable traces in his written and spoken words. I do not think it would be true to say, however, that by the beginning of 1895 Swamiji had given the final form to his Vedanta; for through the following years his message was to shift in emphasis and to become ever more complete and detailed. Nor from what knowledge I have of the texts of Vedanta does it appear to me that he

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taught orthodox Vedanta in every respect. He mixed with it, for instance, a great deal of Sankhya in order to answer some of the questions posed by modern knowledge. It is not my purpose, however, to expound Swamiji's Vedanta or to discuss the detailed developments that took place in it. I want only to point out that such changes did take place and that Vedanta, as he taught it, was in certain respects his own contribution to the modern age.

One may ask why Swamiji gave a name—Vedanta—to the principles of one religion. On the face of it, this was not necessary, for as he himself often observed, those principles have always existed, in greater or lesser degree, in every religion. And did he not write, "The real thing is *the Religion* taught by Sri Ramakrishna; let the Hindus call it Hinduism, and others call it in their own way"? Why, then, if *the Religion* could be found in established religions, did he call it by a specific name? One obvious and important reason is, of course, that the name already existed. The one religion in all its aspects had already been formulated and for thousands of years had been called Vedanta. Swamiji could not ignore this fact. I can think, however, of at least two other reasons.

First, he had, as we have seen, attempted throughout his lecture tour to define the harmony of religions in the truest sense and had concluded that it consisted in the recognition of the unity of religions or, rather, in the recognition of *religion,* which is always one and the same. Now, had he not given religion a name, its concept would have remained vague, and the dangers of such vagueness are apparent. There would, for instance, be little likelihood of the essentials of religion remaining clearly defined and unadulterated if it were left for each creed to interpret them according to its particular inclinations. Compromise would be an inevitable result, and shortly the fundamentals of religion would be again lost in various dogmas. Moreover, not every religion or creed is possessed, or wants to be possessed, of *all* the fundamentals of religion; in fact, every religion, other than Hinduism, would be hard put to it to discover room for them within its tenets.

The second reason I can think of why Swamiji wanted to give a name to the one religion was that in so doing he not only ensured the purity of its principles, but made it possible for anyone to follow those principles without first attaching himself to a specific creed and burdening himself with forms and ceremonials not necessary to him. One could, in short, become a "Vedantin" and go straight to the heart

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of religion itself. "By combining some of the active and heroic elements of the West with calm virtues of the Hindus, there will come a type of men far superior to any that have ever been in this world," he had written in September 1894 to Haridas Viharidas Desai. Now in May of 1895 he wrote with firm purpose to Alasinga, "I am to create a new order of humanity here." But this new type of man could not come into existence unless he was thoroughly trained in the doctrines and practices of pure religion; and those doctrines and practices necessarily had to be defined and named, not only to safeguard them from adulteration but to give them clarity and cohesiveness in the minds of their followers.

IV

In attempting to analyze the way in which Swamiji arrived at his message and mission, I may have made it appear that his efforts in this respect were mainly intellectual and therefore speculative. I did not mean to imply, however, that his ideas necessarily originated on the level of discursive reason or depended upon it for their validity. It is true that during his lecture tour he seems to have been working toward a complete definition of his message, to have been *thinking* it out. It is also true that, according to Sister Christine, he sometimes spent hours debating aloud the pros and cons of a given problem before coming to its solution. But does reasoning preclude divine inspiration or divine confirmation?

One cannot ignore the fact that Swamiji was an illumined soul and that his thought was not like that of ordinary men but was intuitive and free of laborious process. Indeed, the line between his thought process and divine inspiration was a fine one and perhaps impossible to draw. He often said that there are truths which cannot be comprehended by reason but which, though beyond its grasp, are never contradictory to it. Innumerable must have been the times when, in search of truth, he transcended reason's boundary and discovered beyond it facts which are unavailable to reason but nevertheless harmonious with it. To him who was effortlessly in touch with a vast and infinitely wise consciousness that boundary was not a barrier. Rather, the working of reason and that of superreason must have been for him a continuous, single process.

In thinking of the ease with which Swamiji's mind moved between

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the realms of reason and superreason, one is reminded of two passages in Sister Nivedita's "The Master as I Saw Him." Writing of "the stories he would tell of his lecturing experiences," she narrates: "At night, in his own room, a voice, he said, would begin to shout at him the words he was to say on the morrow, and the next day he would find himself repeating, on the platform, the things he had heard it tell. Sometimes there would be two voices, arguing with each other. Again the voice would seem to come from a long distance, speaking to him down a great avenue. Then it might draw nearer and nearer, till it would become a shout. 'Depend upon it,' he would say, 'whatever in the past has been meant by inspiration, it must have been something like this!' " "Again," Sister Nivedita writes in the same book, "there was the dream that he recounted on board ship, 'in which I heard two voices discussing the marriage-ideals of the East and the West, and the conclusion of the whole was, that there was something in each, with which as yet, the world could ill afford to part.' "

Whether the voices Swamiji heard came from the depths of his own being or from some other source is immaterial. The fact remains that his thoughts often originated in a region far beyond that of the ordinary mind. "I am an instrument, and He is the operator," he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda apropos of his mission in America. "Through this instrument He is awakening the spiritual consciousness in thousands of hearts in this far-off country." We know that in America Swamiji was in direct communion with his Master. During the course of this book I have given several instances of this fact and have quoted his own avowals of it. There are many more hints and affirmations in his letters to the effect that his work and thought were divinely directed and also that his experiences were far beyond the range of ordinary comprehension and often too sacred or too startling to be divulged. "For the last six months," he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda in 1894, "I have been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising. The curtain is lifting—lifting by degrees, slow but sure. It will be known in time. *He* knows." He goes on to quote the first line of a song Sri Ramakrishna used to sing, " 'How can I tell you the secret of my heart, friend? I am forbidden to do so,' " and then continues, "Brother, these are not things I can write about or speak about." And to Alasinga in August of 1895, "I could have told you many things that could have made your heart leap, but I will not. I want iron wills and hearts that do not know how to quake."

But while Swamiji did not reveal his spiritual experiences in his

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letters, he left no doubt about the fact that he was continually receiving divine guidance. "While I am on earth, Sri Ramakrishna is working through me," he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda in 1895. "So long as you believe this, there is no danger of any evil for you." And there was his assurance to Alasinga: "I *see* a greater Power than man, or God, or devil at my back."

That his decisions were not guided by reason or practical considerations alone is well illustrated by the fact that during the peak of his success in London in 1896 he decided to leave for India—a departure which from a common-sense point of view was, to say the least, untimely. But to Miss MacLeod he wrote: "Of course everybody here thinks it foolish to give it [the London work] up just now that the 'boom' is on, but the Dear Lord says, 'Start for Old India.' I obey." At a later date he wrote to Mary Hale, who was fearful lest by his outspokenness he antagonize people: "My time is short. I have got to unbreast whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates others. Therefore, my dear Mary, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the power behind me is not Vivekananda but He the Lord, and He knows best." Few people, if any, fully understood Swamiji. To his disciple, Alasinga, he wrote: "I am a singular man, my son, not even you can understand me yet." And to another disciple, G. G. Narasimhacharya, "You have not caught my fire yet—you do not understand me." Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna himself had said, "No one will be able to understand Naren [Swami Vivekananda]"—and so it was. What he said and did were often beyond the understanding of even his brother monks, his actions and words sometimes seeming to them impetuous and detrimental to his own mission. He himself, however, worked according to an inner knowledge. "You need not be afraid," he wrote to Swami Brahmananda in 1897, "I do not work alone, but He is always with me."

One remembers how he thundered when his brother monks felt that he was departing from the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna: "How do you know that these are not in keeping with his ideas? Do you want to shut Sri Ramakrishna, the embodiment of infinite ideas, within your own limits? I shall break these limits and scatter his ideas broadcast all over the world. . . . He himself is at my back and is making me do all these things in these ways." And again, "I am a slave of Ramakrishna, who left his work to be done by me and will not give me rest till I have finished it."

In view of these things, it is quite clear that Swamiji's conclusions

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regarding his message either originated with Sri Ramakrishna or had his approval, and one cannot think, therefore, that the evolution of his message as Vedanta was the product of reason alone; one would be far more correct in thinking that it was of the nature of revelation. Yet all prophets must put their revelations into terms comprehensible to the human mind, terms that can be grasped by thought and understood step by logical step. This translation of a divine vision into philosophical and practical form is one of the essential functions of a world teacher, and was, in Swamiji's case, a work immensely complex. We can only say, therefore, that he was guided both by divine inspiration and by his own intellect. But in so saying we must bear in mind that his intellect opened out into the realm of superconsciousness, that his thought was so penetrative and so broad that it could in itself scarcely be distinguished from prophecy.

Swamiji's mission was, in a sense, twofold. First, he was deeply concerned with finding a practical and unified answer to the many problems facing the modern world. Second, being the appointed messenger of Sri Ramakrishna, he was equally concerned with spreading his Master's teachings in their most pristine and also most complete form. As I pointed out above and as he so often said, he taught nothing that was not of Sri Ramakrishna. The combination of these two objectives into one mission had involved, on the one hand, a thorough and prescient knowledge of the interwoven and enormously complicated struggles of an age which at the end of the nineteenth century had only just begun, and, on the other hand, a thorough understanding of every aspect of a divine personality of infinite scope. Had Sri Ramakrishna been less than he was—a complete and universal being, combining within himself every mode of God and every ideal of man—it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for Swamiji to equate his universal Vedanta with his Master's life and message. As it was, he saw the two as one and inseparable. Although it is not apparent that every aspect of Swamiji's Vedanta was derived from the recorded teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Master was, in Swamiji's understanding, its complete living embodiment. And, conversely, Vedanta, as Swamiji conceived it, was the systematic representation and exegesis of that great life. That which, as principle, was Vedanta, was, as living existence, Sri Ramakrishna. "His life," Swamiji wrote, "is the living commentary on the Vedas of all religions." To make Vedanta inclusive of all human aspirations, efforts and

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achievements, to comprehend the universal dimensions of his Master's life and teachings, and to equate the two, was one of Swamiji's supreme contributions to the world—a stroke of prophetic genius which not many of Sri Ramakrishna's devotees understood at first and which some, one suspects, do not understand yet.

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EPILOGUE

I

Swamiji's 1895 classes in New York lasted through May. Summer was about to settle over the city ; people were leaving for the mountains and seashore, and Swamiji himself longed for rest. Yet more urgent than his need for rest was his desire to place his work on a permanent footing. Since many of his students themselves disliked the thought of his classes being discontinued during the summer months, a plan was evolved which made it possible for him to escape from the sweltering city and, at the same time, to train a group of men and women to carry on his work—a plan which resulted in the most spiritually fruitful days of his American mission. One of his students, a Miss Dutcher, offered him a small house she owned on Thousand Island Park, an island in the St. Lawrence River, for his own use and that of as many students as it would accommodate. Swamiji accepted, agreeing to join at Thousand Island Park any students who were earnest enough to travel the three hundred miles from New York.

In the meantime he accepted an invitation from his friend and disciple, Mr. Francis Leggett, to visit the latter's fishing camp at Percy, New Hampshire. Here for ten days he was free to wander alone in the birch woods and by the lake, to read his Gita and to meditate under the trees. The story is told by Miss MacLeod, who, with her widowed sister, Mrs. William Sturges, was also a guest of Mr. Leggett, that on one of these days Swamiji was discovered by a gardener on the shore of the lake—to all appearances dead. Rushing to the scene, Mr. Leggett and the two women did everything in their power to rouse their beloved friend and teacher. Failing, they were about to accept the incredible fact of his death when signs of life appeared in his body and he returned gradually to normal consciousness. Swamiji had been in nirvikalpa samadhi (union with the Absolute), a state from which only the great spiritual teachers can descend to the relative world.

Refreshed spiritually, mentally and physically, he returned briefly to New York and from there traveled to Thousand Island Park, where a few students were already assembled and where Miss Dutcher had thoughtfully added a large wing to the house for his own use. The

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island, nine miles long and from one to two miles wide, was in those days almost uninhabited. Miss Dutcher's cottage stood on the side of a wooded and bouldered hill, overlooking the broad river. There twelve students in all (never more than ten at a time) sat at the feet of their great guru, and there Swamiji was in one of his most exalted and luminous moods. Indeed, so high was the state of his mind during these weeks that, while meditating on the bank of the river, he again entered into nirvikalpa samadhi.

Every morning from June 19 to August 6 he held classes on Vedanta, using as his texts first one world scripture and then another—the New Testament, the Gita, the Upanishads or the Vedanta-Sutras. But his teaching did not stop with classes. On long walks through the woods, at meals, even on the occasions when he prepared meals for his disciples, he would turn each small occurrence into a spiritual lesson and each hour of the day into a festival. In the cool, silent evenings he would talk long to the group which gathered in breathless attention on the upper veranda of the house.

At Thousand Island Park Swamiji initiated two disciples into sannyasa (the final vows of monasticism): Leon Landsberg, who thus became Swami Kripananda, and a French woman, previously known as Madame Marie Louise, who became Swami Abhayananda. Five other students were initiated into brahmacharya (the vows of chastity and poverty taken by a novice), and others received mantras (sacred words or phrases to be repeated). None, one can be sure, ever forgot those seven ecstatic weeks; but they were weeks that passed all too quickly. Swamiji held his last class in Miss Dutcher's house on August 6 and the following day returned to New York City. From there, on August 17, he sailed for Europe.

For many months Swamiji had been considering the possibility of going to London, but the time to do so had never seemed ripe. Now the way opened up of itself. Miss Henrietta Muller, an English woman whom he had met in America, invited him to be her guest in London. Hearing of his intended visit, Mr. E. T. Sturdy, whom Swamiji had never met but with whom he had been carrying on a correspondence, wrote him a cordial letter extending a like invitation. Around the same time, Mr. Francis Leggett invited him to travel to Paris. Coming one upon another, these invitations, Swamiji felt, constituted "a Divine call." There was no doubt in his mind that he should accept them.

After a week in Paris, during which he witnessed his host's

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marriage to Betty Sturges (Miss MacLeod's sister), he went directly to London where he commenced work almost at once. Staying first with Miss Muller and then with Mr. Sturdy, he held small morning and evening classes, news of which spread rapidly. Soon visitors began to seek a word with or a glimpse of the "Hindu Yogi," newspapers published interviews with him, invitations poured in, and within three weeks Swamiji found himself engaged in work as strenuous as that in New York. Through October and most of November he gave lectures and held classes at private residences, clubs, public halls and also in rooms rented for the purpose. The London press wrote enthusiastically and with the utmost respect of his teachings.

Swamiji was satisfied with his London work and surprised that he had been so well and sympathetically received by a people he had thought inimical to Hindu culture. "I am astonished myself at it," he wrote to a Madrasi disciple on November 18. ". . . Bands and bands come and I have no room for so many; so they squat on the floor, ladies and all. . . . I shall have to go away next week, and they are so sorry." It was in answer to the urgent call of his American disciples and in answer also to his own desire to see his New York work permanently established that he left London on November 27. After a stormy and tedious passage, he arrived in New York on December 6.

During Swamiji's last year in the West he accomplished an incredible amount of work. The first three months—December, 1895, January and February, 1896—were spent in New York City, where he held classes twice daily, wrote his books "Karma Yoga," "Bhakti Yoga," and "Raja Yoga," gave innumerable interviews and, in January and February, delivered two series of free Sunday lectures, some of which are included in "Jnana Yoga." In addition he lectured twice at Hartford, Connecticut, and once at the Brooklyn Ethical Association. Moreover, through correspondence, he continued to guide his work in India, which included now the direction of the *Brahmavadin*, the magazine his Madrasi disciples had started at his urging.

In March and April Swamiji revisited the other American cities where his thought had struck deep roots—Detroit, Cambridge and Chicago—and there lectured and held classes before crowded audiences. His intellectual triumphs in America were perhaps crowned when he was invited to lecture on March 25 before the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University and when, after the lecture, he was

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offered the chair of Eastern Philosophy—an honor which, being a monk, he declined.

On April 15 Swamiji sailed again for London. There from May to December—with the exception of a summer holiday, during which he toured Europe with his English disciples, Captain and Mrs. J. H. Sevier—he held classes and gave lectures almost incessantly. Many of these London lectures were transcribed, as were those in New York, by his secretary-disciple, Mr. Goodwin, and were later incorporated into the now famous "Jnana Yoga," which in the opinion of many of his students contains the very essence of his teachings.

Thus, by the end of 1896, after three years and three months of constant toil, Swamiji had laid the foundations of his work in America and England so firmly that, as he wrote to Swami Brahmananda, "Nobody has the power to shake them." He had left a rich legacy of his thought in the form of four books; he had given intensive training to many disciples and had blessed innumerable men and women. In New York the Vedanta Society had been established, and Swami Saradananda, whom in London Swamiji had coached in the ways of the West, had come to help with the work. Although no society had been organized in London, the work was put under the guidance of Swami Abhedananda, who at Swamiji's call had also come from India. Satisfied that he had done all that he could, Swamiji left London on December 16 and, in company with the Seviers (and Mr. Goodwin who joined the party in Naples), headed at last for his motherland.

II

Although Swamiji knew that the people of India would respond to his message, he was not prepared for the tremendous ovation that greeted him. Traveling by stages from Colombo, where he had landed on January 15, 1897, to Madras, he received everywhere the adoration and homage of thousands upon thousands of his countrymen. Everywhere the streets were elaborately decorated and lengthy speeches were delivered in his praise. At one place his carriage was drawn by a group of devotees, at another, hundreds flung themselves on the tracks in front of his approaching train, forcing it to stop so that they might catch a glimpse of him. Everywhere he addressed the multitudes, firing them with his spirit and awakening them to an appreciation of their ancient culture. His nine-day stay (February 6-15) at Madras was

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a veritable festival, as was the reception given him in the city of his birth, Calcutta, to which he had traveled from Madras by boat, arriving on February 20. No honor was too great to pay him, no words effusive enough to express the love and reverence the people felt for him. To Swamiji all this meant but one thing—that India's spiritual greatness still lived, that she was still able to give higher tribute to a homeless sannyasin than to a military hero, a statesman or a king. He was profoundly moved.

In Calcutta Swamiji made his headquarters during the day at the riverside home of Gopal Lal Seal in Cossipore. At night he stayed with his brother monks at the Ramakrishna Math in Alambazar. To both places a stream of people came to visit him—scholars, students, householders and monks—asking questions that touched upon everything from abstruse philosophy to matters of personal concern. To all, particularly to the young unmarried men, in whom he saw India's hope, he communicated his dream of awakening the giant soul of his motherland, inspiring them with his own enthusiasm and determination. For the most part, Swamiji's brother monks did not at first fully understand or approve of his new conception of spirituality and monasticism. For millenniums, India's sannyasins had been striving for illumination through the age-old and not invalid means of solitude, austerity, meditation and ceremonial worship. The monks of the Ramakrishna Math had continued, more or less, in the old order of things, finding in Sri Ramakrishna a tremendous spiritual impetus, but failing to find in his teachings a radical departure from the traditional paths of spiritual practice. Then, like a whirlwind, Swamiji burst upon them, exhorting them to lay down their lives in the service of others, to be intensely active, teaching the ignorant, feeding the poor, nursing the sick, bringing help to disaster-stricken areas, publishing magazines, opening centers, preaching throughout India. At last, won over by the overwhelming force of his love for them, as much as by the fervor of his conviction, Swamiji's brother monks bowed their heads to his will, understanding that it was in truth their Master who spoke through him and remembering, no doubt, that Sri Ramakrishna had left them in his charge and had asked them to obey him. Perhaps this conversion of his brothers from the old type of monasticism to the new, in which the ideals of renunciation and service were united, constituted one of Swamiji's greatest accomplishments; for it was through the devoted and faithful cooperation of Sri Ramakrishna's monastic disciples that the work of revitalizing India and the world

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could be undertaken, and though perhaps personal reservations lingered in the minds of some, Swamiji's brothers gave that cooperation without demur. Yet, needless to say, the work of the Order itself would not have come into existence had not Swamiji planned it, inspired it, guided it and poured into it his tremendous spiritual vitality and knowledge. On May 1, 1897, he called a meeting of his Master's monastic and lay disciples and inaugurated, with himself as General President, the Ramakrishna Mission Association, the purpose of which was to establish the humanitarian work of the Order on an organized basis.

Swamiji's poor health soon forced him to leave the hot, humid climate of Bengal. On May 6, accompanied by a party of brother monks and disciples, he left Calcutta for Almora, where Miss Muller and Mr. Goodwin awaited him. But rest was a factor that played little part in his life. Although the dry and cool air of Northern India benefited him, his two and a half months in Almora were spent in almost continual activity, in receiving streams of visitors, holding discourses and granting interviews. In early August he started on a lecture tour of Northern India, accompanied by several of his brother monks and disciples. For the next five months, though often ill, he lectured and talked almost unremittingly, visiting many places in the Punjab, Kashmir, Rajputana, and Central Provinces, awakening in the minds of the people a luminous vision of a resurgent India and placing before them the ideals of renunciation and service.

In the middle of January, having finished his tour, he returned to the Alambazar Math, and there, along with many other activities, continued the training of his young disciples. He held classes not only in Sanskrit scriptures, but in material sciences and history as well, he gave lectures, spent hours with them in meditation or devotional singing and discussed with them every topic under the sun, until his ideas became an integral part of their thought and until they themselves became, as he wanted, "strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone."

Swamiji gave as much care and attention to his Western disciples as to his Eastern. At his call, Miss Margaret Noble had come from England in January, 1898, to found a school for Hindu girls. In February, Mrs. Ole Bull and Miss Josephine MacLeod arrived to help him in whatever way they could. To the question of how this could best be done, Swamiji replied in two words: "Love India!"—and it was through his constant and careful guidance that they learned to

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do so. Indeed, it was not difficult to love India when the country was seen through his eyes and understood through his heart. From May to October his Western disciples, together with a number of his brother monks and Eastern disciples, traveled with him through Northern India. He made them thrill as he did himself to the glories of India's history, to the beauties of her present and to the simple but noble life of the people, which was rooted in a tradition whose beginnings were lost in an unfathomable past and whose meaning had been continually enriched by generation upon generation of God-centered lives. The party journeyed from Naini Tal to Almora, where the Seviers were already established and where, in the early part of June, Swamiji received the shocking and heart-breaking news of the death of his young disciple, Mr. Goodwin. Traveling on, the party reached the beautiful Kashmir Valley, and there leisurely meandered in houseboats up the River Jhelum through the Vale of Srinagar.

In India a new side of Swamiji was revealed to his Western disciples: they saw not only the benign, all-loving and serene teacher they had known in the West, but the fervent, almost fierce, patriot and "man-maker." They saw, moreover, the majestic and awesome moods of the supreme knower of God, whose spiritual experiences reached heights incomprehensible to the mind and who walked paths where none could follow. In India, even during the first weeks after his arrival, when the whole country rose as one man to welcome him, he would enter during the course of the day into many a brief samadhi. Professor K. Sundararama Iyer, who has related his impressions of Swamiji's nine days in Madras in February of 1897, tells us of his moods of "sweet serenity when his face assumed the air both of a child and an angel from Heaven," and of his sudden lapses into a strange state. "He was always having visitors about him," Professor Iyer writes, "and sat listening or speaking to them. Suddenly his eyes became still, though remaining open, and he seemed not to listen or even to be conscious of what was passing about him. When once more he became aware of the scene, he seemed as if he had been utterly insensible to it. He had been neither asleep nor awake. . . . His eyes . . . remained fixed and without the least sign of movement. . . . He seemed to me like one who for awhile had left this physical tenement and fleeted away to another state of existence." Indeed, Swami Shivananda and Swami Niranjanananda, who were with Swamiji in Madras, both noticed his frequent though brief absorptions into samadhi, and the former was heard many years after to remark that ever since

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Swamiji's first return from the West he had dwelt in a continuous state of superconsciousness.

While in Kashmir with his Western disciples, Swamiji suddenly announced his desire to visit the Cave of Amarnath, the far-away shrine of Shiva, to which hundreds of devotees were making a pilgrimage. Alone of his Western disciples, Sister Nivedita was chosen to accompany him, making the week-long climb on foot, up and across precipitous, snow-covered mountains. In the huge Cave of Amarnath, Swamiji, nude except for kaupina, or loincloth, his body covered with ashes and his face glowing with devotion, looked upon the great ice symbol of Shiva, and in a supreme moment of divine consciousness beheld the living God Himself. He spoke little of this experience, but when he returned to the Vale of Kashmir it seemed to those near him as if Shiva, the Eternal One, had literally permeated his being.

Following his absorption in Shiva, Swamiji's mind and heart turned to the Divine Mother, the Power behind all relative forms. With the same awesome intensity with which he had been concentrated in the motionless and silent God, he was now absorbed in His dynamic aspect. Abruptly he left his disciples and retired for a week to the Colored Springs of Kshir-Bhavani, a famous shrine of the Mother. There, lost to the world, he performed daily worship and practiced severe austerities. Although we know that at Kshir-Bhavani Swamiji heard the voice of the Divine Mother speaking to him, we know little of his other experiences, of which he no doubt had many ; for, after returning from the shrine he quoted his own poem "Kali, the Mother" and said: "It all came true, every word of it ; and I have proved it, for I have hugged the Form of Death!"

The impact of the spiritual experiences through which Swamiji had passed left his body shattered ; yet his work continued. Returning to Calcutta in October he took up as strenuously as ever his task of guiding the activities of his brother monks and disciples. In December he installed the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna in the new Math (Monastery) at Belur—where, earlier in the year, he had purchased fifteen acres on the Ganga. A month later the monastery was moved to these permanent headquarters and thenceforth became known as the "Belur Math." Until June of 1899 Swamiji remained, for the most part, in Calcutta, and then, on the advice of his doctors and friends, set sail once again for the West.

Swamiji was aware that there were but few years left to him on this earth. "I am getting ready to depart to return no more to this

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hell, this world," he wrote as early as August, 1896; and to Mary Hale in July of 1897: "At most three or four years more of life is left. . . . My time is short." Again, on August 11, 1897, while on his lecture tour in Northern India, he said to a monk accompanying him, "I shall live five or six years more." Thus, knowing how little time he had, he worked with impatience to finish his task and to train others to feel as he felt and to work as he worked. It was an almost terrible impatience, in which his spirit thrashed against the inertia of the world that he longed to lift and exalt—an impatience which led Sister Nivedita to write: "From the moment of my landing in India . . . I found something quite unexpected. . . . It was the personality of my Master himself, in all the fruitless torture and struggle of a lion caught in a net."

Torture it may have been; but fruitless it was not, for during Swamiji's two and a half years in his motherland he had put his "machine in strong working order." Aside from the immeasurable influence he had exerted over the minds and hearts of his countrymen, he had permanently organized the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—the monastic and humanitarian branches of the Order. (In 1900 Swamiji was to hand over the presidency of both the Math and the Mission to Swami Brahmananda. "Now I am free," he wrote to Sister Nivedita on August 25, 1900, "as I have kept no power or authority or position for me in the work. I also have resigned the Presidentship of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Math etc. belong now to the immediate disciples of Ramakrishna except myself. The Presidentship is now Brahmananda's—next it will fall on Premananda etc., in turn. I am so glad a whole load is off me, now I am happy." But in 1897, '98 and '99 the "whole load" of organizing and supervising the work of the Order was mainly his.) Under his direction, Swami Ramakrishnananda had successfully started a center in Madras. On November 12, 1899, Sister Nivedita had opened her girls' school. His disciples, Swamis Virajananda and Prakashananda, had, at his wish, gone to Dacca in East Bengal to preach Vedanta; two of his brother monks, Swamis Saradananda and Turiyananda, had departed to preach in Gujerat (the former, in December of 1899, went also to Dacca and other cities of East Bengal), and Swami Shivananda had traveled to Ceylon, where he formed classes in raja yoga and the Gita.

Aside from having established monastic centers in Calcutta and Madras, Swamiji realized through the help of his London disciples, Captain and Mrs. Sevier, his long cherished dream of setting up a

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monastery in the Himalayas. The site of Mayavati, which the Seviers had found after much searching, was an entire hill, 6,300 feet above sea level. After its purchase, Swamiji commissioned four of his disciples to construct additional buildings on the property, to make roads and to landscape the grounds. The monastery was dedicated to the principle of Advaita, or Monistic, Vedanta. External worship of any kind was barred. "Here will be taught and practised," Swamiji wrote, "nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple; and though in entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone."

The message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji was disseminated not only by the preaching activities of the Order, but through the medium of the written word. Very dear to Swamiji's heart were the three magazines which he had established between 1895 and 1899. The first of these, the *Brahmavadin,* was published in English by his Madrasi disciples and had been under way since September of 1895. In 1897, while he was in Almora, Swamiji arranged to revive the defunct magazine, *Prabuddha Bharata,* an English language monthly, the editor of which had recently died. With the help of the Seviers the editorial offices were moved from Madras to Almora and, with Swami Swarupananda as editor, the magazine was published as an organ of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Later, the offices were transferred to Mayavati, where, to this day, *Prabuddha Bharata,* or *Awakened India,* is edited monthly, spreading the ideals of the Order. A third magazine was the *Udbodhan.* Since 1894 Swamiji had urged his gurubhais (brother monks) to start a Bengali periodical. Swami Trigunatita was the first to take up the idea of the magazine with enthusiasm and, as early as 1896, made plans to publish it. It was not, however, until January 14, 1899, that the *Udbodhan* made its first appearance with Swami Trigunatita as its editor and manager.

The publication of books, which today forms an important function of the Ramakrishna Order, was also undertaken during Swamiji's lifetime, his own works being published in both English and Bengali by the Math.

An important part of the work of the Ramakrishna Mission was the opening of temporary relief centers in times of disaster. In 1897 Swami Akhandananda, who had earlier established schools in Khetri under Swamiji's encouragement and detailed direction, began to work in the famine-stricken district of Murshidabad in Bengal in an effort to give what help he could. On hearing of this Swamiji was, of course,

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overjoyed. He sent two of his disciples as assistants and started a fund to which contributions poured in. Though at a distance, he directed the work, making sure that it followed his far-seeing policy. At his urging, Swami Akhandananda instituted a nonsectarian orphanage for both boys and girls at Mohula—the first of its kind to be founded under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Order. The orphanage had—as had all of Swamiji's work—the support of his brother monks. Swami Brahmananda, who was then president of the Calcutta branch of the Mission, wrote on July 7, 1898, to Swami Akhandananda: "I am very glad to learn that you are working hard for the orphanage. . . . When you will feel much and tremendous want for money, please at once write to your servant [Brahmananda] who will try his utmost to help in your noble cause. Even he is ready to sacrifice his life for your cause."

Other relief work was set up under the guidance of Swamiji by his various brother monks and disciples. In August of 1897, Swami Trigunatita opened a famine relief center in Dinajpur. About the same time a third relief center was established at Deoghar by Swami Virajananda, and a fourth and a fifth at Calcutta and Dakshineswar. In May of 1898 Swamiji prepared for relief operations in Calcutta to meet a threatened outbreak of plague, coming down from a needed vacation in Darjeeling to do so. "If the plague comes to my native city," he had written from Darjeeling on April 29, 1898, "I am determined to make myself a sacrifice." In the few days during which the epidemic seemed imminent he did all that was necessary to meet it. Through means of plague manifestoes, he brought confidence to the panic-stricken people ; further, he made arrangements for setting up a quarantine camp and also for teaching sanitation to the people and, if need be, for cleaning the lanes and houses of various districts. The following year, 1899, when an epidemic actually broke out in the city, the Ramakrishna Mission plague service went at once into action under Swamiji's direction. The management of the work was placed in the hands of Sister Nivedita as secretary and Swami Sadananda as officer-in-chief. In four districts of the city the poor quarters were cleared of cartloads of filth and with the help of scavengers thoroughly disinfected. Swamiji himself went to live in the slums, that he might bring comfort and courage to the people. On April 21 he presided over a public meeting held in Calcutta, during which fifteen students volunteered for service in response to his stirring plea. As an outcome of this a permanent plague service was established at the Math, making

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it possible, when the most virulent epidemic of all broke out in 1900, for the Ramakrishna Mission to give invaluable aid.

III

On June 20, 1899, Swamiji, in company with Swami Turiyananda and Sister Nivedita, set sail for London, where six weeks later he disembarked. After a stay of two weeks in Wimbledon, a suburb of London, he voyaged on to America. It being summer, he did not at once take up his work of lecturing and teaching, but accepted the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Leggett to make a retreat at their country house on the Hudson, Ridgley Manor. Here, with Swami Turiyananda and later Sister Nivedita, he remained until November 5. Then, after a brief stay in New York City, he left for California, where six months of arduous work awaited him.

In Los Angeles Swamiji was not unknown, for hundreds of people had become familiar with his books, particularly "Raja Yoga," and were eager to meet him and to hear him speak. Indeed, the interest was so great that during his stay of two and a half months in Southern California he gave many lectures to large audiences and also held classes on raja yoga at the "Home of Truth."

Leaving Los Angeles around the middle of February, Swamiji traveled to Northern California, where he became the guest of the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Fay Mills, pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland. In connection with a local Congress of Religions, which was being held at the time in Dr. Mills' church, he delivered eight lectures to audiences often composed of as many as two thousand people, among whom were prominent California clergymen. The impression he created was tremendous, and at the request of some San Franciscans, he moved to their city toward the end of February. There he worked strenuously through March and April, lecturing and holding classes almost incessantly. Aside from appearing in San Francisco, he delivered lectures also in Oakland and Alameda, staying at the "Home of Truth" in the latter city. In San Francisco Swamiji formed, as he had in New York and Los Angeles, a Vedanta Society. Moreover, he directed Swami Turiyananda to establish a retreat, "Shanti Ashrama," on a tract of land in the San Antonio Valley, about ninety miles southeast of San Francisco, which had been given to him by one of his devoted students. In May, Swamiji, in the company of a few friends, spent

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three weeks at Camp Taylor—a quiet, wooded spot in Marin County, which has now been incorporated in a state park. It was in memory of his stay there that the Vedanta Society of Northern California has in recent years founded its second retreat and monastery on an extensive tract of scenic forest land not far from the park.

In San Francisco Swamiji was in one of his most supernal moods. He had known two years of extreme suffering, the nature and intensity of which can perhaps be understood only by another eternally free soul held as he by the Divine Mother in the relative world to do Her work. Now his mind was at peace. His health also was better than it had been in years. "I never had a struggle in the jaws of death but it meant a tremendous upheaval of the whole life," he wrote to Sister Nivedita from San Francisco. "One such brought me to Ramakrishna, another sent me to the U.S., this has been the greatest of all." Again on April 7 he wrote to an American friend, "I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was. I am on my own feet, working hard and with pleasure. To work I have the right. Mother knows the rest. . . . My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out." The six months in California completed Swamiji's work in America, he having now extended it to the West Coast, as he had not done during his visit of 1893-96. Toward the end of May he finally left San Francisco and, after stopping over briefly in Chicago and Detroit to visit his friends, arrived in New York on June 7.

For several weeks he lived at the quarters of the New York Vedanta Society, delivering four Sunday lectures and holding four Saturday morning Gita classes. Then, on July 20, he bade a last farewell to America, the country to which he had given the best years of his life.

The next four months were spent, for the most part, in France. In Paris he spoke twice at the Congress of the History of Religions, having mastered the French language well enough to elucidate highly technical and controversial points regarding Vedic religion and Sanskrit literature, which were at the time being debated by Western Orientalists. In France, as everywhere, Swamiji held many conversations with leading intellects of the day, delighting them with his monumental learning and the brilliance with which he threw floods of new light upon every subject. Yet, though outwardly active, he was finding it increasingly difficult not to plunge at the slightest

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provocation into profound meditation, oblivious of his surroundings, lost to the world.

In Egypt, to which he traveled with a party of friends and disciples via Vienna, Athens and Constantinople, his meditative habit seemed to reach a peak. He became more and more withdrawn and appeared to his companions to be letting the world slip at last from his shoulders like a mantle no longer wanted. Indeed, according to Mme. Emma Calvé, who joined the party in Athens, Swamiji knew at this time the very day on which he would die. "He told me," Mme. Calvé related to her friend Mme. Paul Verdier, who has passed the story on to us, "that he was eager to return to his brother monks at Belur, for he was going to leave his body on July 4." To his friends' profound regret, but perhaps not altogether to their surprise, he one day declared his intention of returning at once to India. He had had a premonition not only of his own death but of the approaching death of his dear disciple, Captain Sevier—perhaps also he knew that there was nothing left for him to accomplish in the West: his work there was done.

IV

To the surprise and unbounded joy of his brother monks and disciples, Swamiji arrived unheralded at the Belur Math on the night of December 9, 1900. He, too, was overjoyed to be back and to find that during his absence the Indian work had been carried on faithfully by Swami Brahmananda and his other brothers and his disciples. On December 26 he wrote to Miss MacLeod: "They have worked all right as far as they could ; . . . They are as good and faithful as ever."

Before taking up the work that awaited him in connection with the many branches of the Ramakrishna Order, he traveled to Mayavati where, indeed, Captain Sevier had passed away. Swamiji's bad health, together with the severe cold of the Himalayan winter, made it impossible for him to remain at Mayavati for more than two weeks, but while there he wrote three articles for *Prabuddha Bharata,* carried on his ever voluminous correspondence and supervised the life of the monks who were living at the Ashrama.

Having returned to Belur on January 24, he again set out, this time to accompany his mother on her pilgrimage to the holy places of East Bengal and Assam—a trip which he combined with a lecture tour. For two months he traveled, lectured and received hundreds of

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visitors, resting only intermittently. It was clear to all that his health was growing steadily worse and that his body could not much longer bear the strain of constant work. This, indeed, was his last public lecture tour. He returned to the Belur Math in the second week of May and, except for a short visit to Banaras in the early part of 1902, was not again to leave the monastery.

During the last year of his life, Swamiji devoted himself to training his young monks, that they might advance far in spiritual life and learn to carry on his work. Although technically he had turned the Math over to a Board of Trustees, and although his brothers presumably now directed the manifold work of the Order, thereby gaining in strength and experience, he nevertheless remained the acknowledged head of the Math and Mission, continuing, at the least, to guide their basic policy and to supervise the intimate life of the monastery, meticulous as to its routine. He also held daily classes in Vedanta and received the many visitors who came to him for spiritual instruction. But though he worked tirelessly at Belur, he was able at last to live a simple life, free from the demands of the public, dressing as he pleased, sometimes strolling through the grounds of the Math, lost in profound thought, sometimes finding a child's delight in his pets—his dog, goat, antelope and ducks, sometimes gardening, writing, studying, or—one of his chief pleasures—experimenting in the kitchen. An aura of serene peace, joy and holiness surrounded him. No matter what his mood—playful, deeply serious, fiery, devotional or meditative—it was in each case the mood of a giant personality, a superlative mood, not alone in intensity but in quality, the light of his great spirit transfiguring his every emotion and thought from the human to the divine.

As has been said, during Swamiji's absence in the West his Indian work had been carried on by his brothers and disciples. In the latter part of 1899 India had suffered from one of the most severe famines she had known in many years. With the modest means at their command the members of the Order had set to work to feed as many as they could and to relieve as much suffering as was possible. In the State of Kishangarh in Rajputana, Swami Kalyanananda organized a famine relief center and orphanage, receiving support for his work from the local Durbar and also from individual donations. Another work of famine relief was conducted by Swami Sureshwarananda at Khandwa in the Central Provinces. Disaster relief was also undertaken. In the Bhagalpur District of Behar, entire villages had been swept away by

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a devastating flood. Hundreds had been killed and hundreds more left destitute. From his orphanage at Mohula Swami Akhandananda rushed to the stricken area and there opened a relief center at Ghoga, where he worked from October 15 to December 20 of 1899. Another catastrophe in which the Mission provided help was a landslide at Darjeeling. Here in 1899 Swami Shivananda brought relief to hundreds who were left homeless. The work done during the plagues in Calcutta in 1899 has already been referred to. It should be mentioned, however, that in March of 1902 a plague camp was opened in Vaniyambadi in the Madras Presidency by the local devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji.

Besides these temporary relief centers set up in times of emergency, Swamiji wanted to see India covered with permanent Sevashramas or Homes of Service, which would give all possible aid to the poor, diseased and helpless people of his motherland. Before his passing, two such centers were founded: one in Banaras and the other at Kankhal in Hardwar. Out of these small but spirited beginnings, large Homes of Service with outdoor dispensaries and hospitals with many wards were eventually built up in both places, which today give succor to thousands of men and women. Several years after Swamiji's passing, similar Sevashramas were founded in Brindavan and Allahabad.

The Maths at Belur, Madras and Mayavati, which were all established by Swamiji, were, as he wrote to Mary Hale, his "normal schools"—the schools he had long dreamed of, from which monks would spread throughout India bringing to the people both spiritual and secular knowledge. A branch monastary at Banaras and the nucleus of one at Allahabad were also started before he passed away, and it was his inspiration which later led Swami Shivananda to establish a center at Almora. Moreover, societies were formed during Swamiji's lifetime by his lay disciples for the study and teaching of Vedanta and the undertaking of practical humanitarian works.

One of Swamiji's long-held desires was to found a convent for women with Holy Mother at its head. "Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti [Divine Energy] in India," he wrote in 1894, "and making her the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis [women sages] be born into the world. . . . Hence it is her Math [Convent] that I want first." It can be said that this was perhaps the one wish that Swamiji did not realize during his lifetime. Yet in a sense it was realized, for Holy Mother evidently agreed to his plan and recognized herself as the head of a monastic movement for women. In

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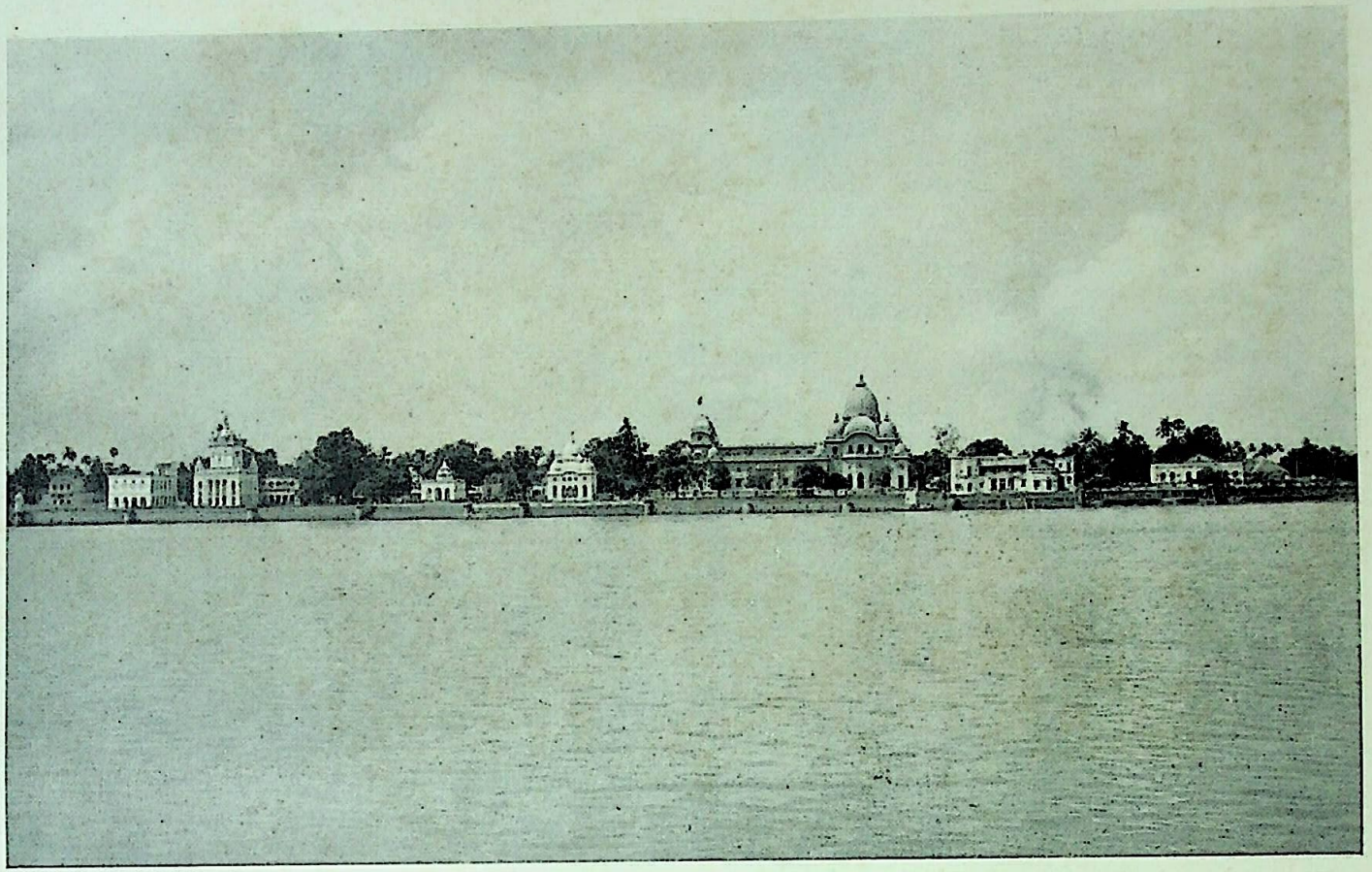

THE BELUR MATH

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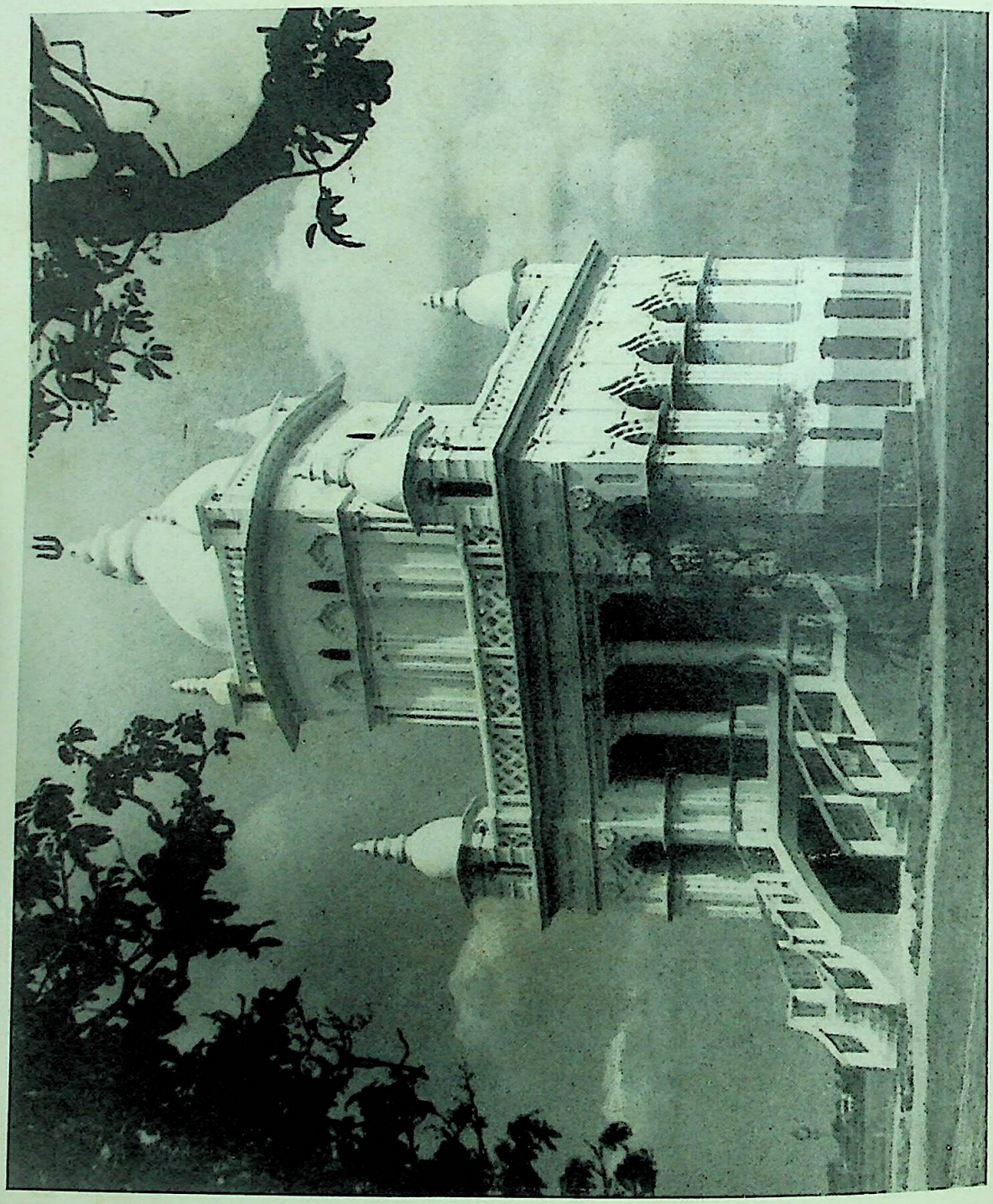

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TEMPLE

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a letter which she wrote on August 30, 1902, to a monk at Mayavati, Mother gave "Convent for Women" as part of her address. (Incidentally, I have been fortunate enough to have seen and to have had translated for me Holy Mother's original letter. Aside from the lines which have been quoted in "The Life," she wrote in part: "How can I express what agony I am suffering at the passing of Sri Sri Swamiji Maharaj! . . . Live carefully in the monastery now that there is no longer the sustaining power of Swamiji.") Although the convent for women was not formally organized at that time, the very fact that Mother acknowledged its existence and regarded herself as its head gave it spiritual substance. It was only a matter of time before the convent would be realized—as it has been—on the concrete plane.

But though the convent for women was not, practically speaking, organized during his lifetime as Swamiji would have wished, almost every other branch along which the Ramakrishna Order was to grow had been placed on a practical and sound basis. Between the day of his arrival at Colombo on January 15, 1897, and the day of his passing on July 4, 1902, he had organized Maths and Missions, relief centers, orphanages and schools, preaching work and magazine and book publication. He had taught his Western disciples to work in India and had sent Hindu preachers abroad, thus setting the precedent for the exchange of workers between India and the West. Through his letters from the West and later in conference with his brother monks, he had drawn up a set of rules for the guidance of the Order in both its monastic and humanitarian aspects and had personally directed every detail of its government and policy. He had, moreover, exemplified his own teachings through his life of selfless work and had instilled his own spirit into his brothers and disciples, thus ensuring that the work he had begun would never die. But although the amount of visible work which Swamiji accomplished was enormous, compared with the invisible silent work, it was but small. Indeed, the ordinary mind cannot fathom the depth and extent of his work, cannot see the subtle forces he had activated nor divine their ultimate effect upon the visible world. As he himself was heard to say toward the end of his life: "If there were another Vivekananda, he would have understood what Vivekananda has done!"

It was time for Swamiji to leave this world to which he had given so much. But though his work was done, one might ask, as did Miss MacLeod, "Why go?" His answer was characteristically selfless.

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"The shadow of a big tree," he said, "will not let the smaller trees grow up. I must go to make room."

On the evening of July 4, 1902, after a busy day during which his health had seemed better than it had in months, Swamiji entered into his final samadhi. But though he cast aside his body, returning with what joy one cannot even dream to that realm of infinite bliss from which he had come, he so loved mankind that one knows his words spoken long before his death were prophetic ones. "It may be," he had said, "that I shall find it good to get outside my body—to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God."

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GLOSSARY

Agnimide "I magnify Agni (god of fire)"—first words of the Rig-veda, used by Swami Vivekananda to indicate ritualistic religion.

Anasuya (Lit., Charity) In the Ramayana, a devotee of Rama, living in a forest hermitage with her husband, the sage Atri.

ashrama A religious retreat or hermitage.

Atman The Self or Spirit, considered by the Nondualistic (Advaita) Vedanta as identical with Brahman or God.

Bhagavata One of the best known of the eighteen Puranas, dedicated to the life of Sri Krishna and other religious heroes and containing many religious and philosophical discourses.

Bhakti Intense devotion to God.

"Bhakti Yoga" "The Path of Devotion"—a book by Swami Vivekananda.

Brahma or Brahman The one self-existent impersonal Spirit, the Divine Essence from which all created things emanate, by which they are sustained and to which they return.

Brahma-Sutras An authoritative text of the Vedanta Philosophy, consisting of aphorisms, ascribed to Badarayana Vyasa.

Brahminical thread The sacred thread worn over the left shoulder by men of the Brahmana caste.

Chandala An outcaste or pariah.

Christine, Sister Christine Greenstidel of Detroit, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda who renounced the world and went to India to carry on his work for the education of women.

darshan (Lit., seeing, perception) The blessing of seeing and being in the presence of a great spiritual person.

Durbar A royal court or royal administration.

gunas (Lit., ropes) The three qualities or constitutive elements of every phenomenon: tamas (stagnation), rajas (activity) and sattva (purity, illumination).

Hathayoga A system of physical practices for the attainment of physical and psychic powers.

Hathayogis Followers of the system of Hathayoga.

Hinayana (Lit., the Small Vehicle or Method) One of the main schools of Buddhist doctrine, now chiefly found in southeast Asia.

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Ishwara-kalpa Nearly equal to or like God.

jnana yoga The path of union with God through Self-knowledge.

"Jnana Yoga" "The Path of Knowledge"—a book containing the lectures of Swami Vivekananda on monistic Vedanta.

karma yoga The path of union with God through selfless action.

"Karma Yoga" A work on the path of action by Swami Vivekananda.

karma-yogin One who, in order to realize God, practices karma yoga, performing action without attachment to results.

Kartabhajas Members of an esoteric sect of Bengal Vaishnavism.

Lakshmi The goddess of fortune and beauty, consort of Vishnu.

Mahabharata A Sanskrit epic, attributed to Vyasa, which describes the dynastic war between the Kuru princes and the sons of Pandu. It is virtually an encyclopedia of Hindu mythology, legendary history, philosophy and moral and spiritual teachings.

Mahamaya The Divine Mother as the Creatrix of the universe, or as the power of illusion which makes the nonexistent universe appear as existent.

Mahasamadhi Death of an illumined person.

Mahayana (Lit., the Great Vehicle or Method) One of the main schools of Buddhist doctrine, said to have been promulgated by Nagarjuna; its many variations are found in Tibet, China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia.

Mimamsakas Followers of Purva Mimamsa, one of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, which emphasizes Vedic ritual.

Naiyayikas Followers of Nyaya, a dualistic system of Indian philosophy, which embraces the science of logic.

Nara The primeval Man or eternal Spirit pervading the universe (always associated with Narayana). Both are considered either as gods or sages.

Narayana (Lit., He whose abode was the deep) A name of Vishnu, God as all-pervading yet transcendent.

nirvikalpa samadhi Supreme superconscious state in which the spiritual aspirant realizes absolute oneness with the Supreme Spirit.

Nivedita, Sister (Lit., Dedicated) The monastic name of Miss Margaret E. Noble, British disciple of Swami Vivekananda who renounced the world and went to India to help in his work, particularly in that of women's education.

Puranas Eighteen well-known Sanskrit treatises containing accounts of creation, mythologies, stories of saints and kings, and many philosophical and religious discourses.

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Radha Sri Krishna's most intimate companion during his boyhood in Brindavan, regarded as the incarnation of the goddess Lakshmi.

rajas One of the three gunas or constitutive elements of phenomena, the quality of activity.

raja yoga (Lit., royal yoga) The science of conquering the mind for the purpose of realizing the pure Self as separate from prakriti or nature, i.e. body, mind etc.

"Raja Yoga" a book on raja yoga by Swami Vivekananda, including his translation of and commentary on Patanjali's "Yoga Aphorisms."

Ramanuja A great Vaishnava teacher who lived in the twelfth century in southern India, the chief expounder of the Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, or Qualified Monism.

Ramayan or Ramayana A Sanskrit epic relating the life of the divine hero Rama, ascribed to the sage Valmiki.

Ranee of Jhansi Lakshmi Bai, ruler of an Indian state, who led her troops in the Munity against the British and died on her own sword rather than be captured.

Rig-veda Oldest and most important of the four Vedas, containing over a thousand hymns.

samadhi Superconscious experience in which the mind, attaining to the ultimate state of calmness and concentration, experiences communion with the Divine Reality.

Sankhya Oldest of the six systems of Indian philosophy, usually ascribed to Kapila. It maintains that there are an infinite number of conscious beings called purushas (souls) and an insentient principle called prakriti, from which the universe is derived.

Sarasvati or Saraswati The goddess of learning and speech.

sashtanga pranama Salutation by prostration so that eight (ashta) parts (anga) of the body touch the ground.

sattva One of the three gunas or constitutive elements of phenomena, the quality of tranquillity, purity, virtue and illumination.

Shaivas Members of a Hindu sect worshiping God as Shiva.

Shaktas Members of a Hindu sect worshiping Shakti, the Divine Energy.

"Shakuntala" "Abhijnana-Shakuntalam"—a celebrated Sanskrit drama by Kalidasa, India's greatest poet and dramatist in that language. The play is based on the life of Shakuntala, wife of King Dushyanta and mother of Bharata, ancestor of a long race of Indian kings.

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Shankara A great philosopher and knower of God of the eighth century A.D., who was the foremost exponent of and commentator on monistic Vedanta.

Shanti Ashrama (Lit., Peace Retreat) A retreat belonging to the Vedanta Society of Northern California.

Shariraka-Sutras The Vedanta-Sutras of Badarayana Vyasa, the aphorisms on the Vedanta philosophy which give it an organized form. Shariraka—the embodied spirit; Sutras—aphorisms.

Shiva (Lit., the Auspicious One) A name of God, specifically in His aspects of destruction and compassion. Shiva is said to be the refuge even of demons.

Shivoham "I am Shiva, the Absolute God"—a mantra used in the practice of monistic Vedanta.

Shruti (Lit., sound, hearing, listening) That which has been heard by or communicated to the sages; the Vedas, including the Upanishads.

Sita Wife of the Divine Incarnation Rama, revered in India as an ideal woman.

"Surata-vardhanam" A phrase from the Bhagavatam, meaning "that which increases intense joy."

Sutras of Vyasa The Vedanta-Sutras. A sutra is an aphorism.

tamas One of the three gunas or constitutive elements of phenomena, the quality of darkness, inertia or ignorance.

Tat Sat (Lit., That Existence) A phrase to indicate Brahman, the Absolute, used by Swami Vivekananda to indicate the highest conception and realization of God.

Tulsidas A great sixteenth century saint and poet who wrote the life of Rama in Hindi verse and also a book of prayers.

Udayanacharya A tenth century philosopher of the Nyaya school.

Upanishads Sanskrit texts, numbering more than a hundred, which embody the spiritual realizations of the seers of ancient India and are regarded as the source of the Vedanta philosophy.

Vaishnava Pertaining to the Hindu sect worshiping God as Vishnu.

Vedanta (Lit., End of the Vedas) The final philosophy of the Vedas as expressed in the Upanishads. It is one of the six systems of philosophy accepted in India, and is interpreted from either the monistic, the qualified monistic or the dualistic point of view. It maintains the ultimate reality to be Brahman.

Vedanta-Sutras Aphorisms on the Vedanta philosophy, treating of the knowledge of Brahman, ascribed to Badarayana Vyasa.

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Vedas Ancient scriptures of the Hindus, considered to have been revealed to seers. The Vedas are divided into four books: Rig-veda, Sama-veda, Yajur-veda and Atharva-veda.

Virat (Lit., Sovereign) Brahman or Supreme Consciousness as associated with the aggregate of gross forms composing the universe.

Vishishtadvaita Qualified Nonduality, the doctrine that the individual spirit has a qualified identity with the one Spirit, a school of Vedanta of which the chief exponent was Ramanuja.

Vishnu The Supreme Being in the aspect of Preserver.

Vyasa A celebrated sage and author of ancient India, compiler of the Vedas and reputed author of the Mahabharata and the Puranas and of the Vedanta-Sutras.

yoga Superconscious experience of Divine Reality in which there is cessation of all modifications of the mind ; union of the individual and the Supreme Soul ; a particular path by which this union can be attained, as for example, karma, bhakti or jnana yoga.

Yoga One of the six principal systems of Indian philosophy, ascribed to Patanjali ; it aims chiefly at teaching the different methods of discipline needed for the attainment of Self-realization, giving specific emphasis to concentration and dispassion.

yogi One who has attained to the state of yoga ; one who is practicing some form of yoga as a means to Self-realization or God-realization.

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